

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

23 JULY 2024

PRESENT

Councillor D. Western (in the Chair).

Councillors R. Duncan (Vice-Chair), J. Bennett, Z.C. Deakin, S. G. Ennis, S. Maitland, E.R. Parker, S. Procter and O. Sutton

In attendance

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| Councillor K. Carter | Executive Member for Children and Young People |
| Sally Smith | Lead for SEND and Inclusion |
| Sally Atkinson | Specialist Commissioner – Children’s Clinical Commissioning |
| Shona Gallagher | SEND Improvement Lead |
| Jill McGregor | Corporate Director for Children’s Services |
| Karen Samples | Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance |
| Harry Callaghan | Senior Democratic Support Officer |

Also Present

Councillor L. Hancock

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors G. Devlin, D. Butt, and F. Hornby, and P. Wharton.

46. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE 2024/25

RESOLVED: That the Membership of the Committee be noted.

47. COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE 2024/25

RESOLVED: That the Committee’s Terms of Reference be noted.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations were made.

49. MINUTES

Councillor Sutton referred to page two of the Minutes and asked that them encouraging Members to pay attention to the breakdown of respondents during consultations, be added to the Minutes.

Councillor Procter raised that their name had been spelt incorrectly in the Membership of the Committee agenda item.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the above changes be made to the Minutes.
- 2) That the Minutes of the meeting held on the 12th March 2024 be approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

50. QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Four questions were received from Members of the Public ahead of the Meeting and were read out by the Chair in the order in which they were received.

The first question is outlined below:

'We would like to ask how the local authority is working to improve understanding within education, health and social care, that an academically able child can have complex support needs, so that blanket policies based on academic ability do not prevent a young person from accessing support, preparing for adulthood and accessing appropriate education and leisure opportunities. Our 15 year old has cognitive abilities on the 99th percentile but independence/self-help skills on the 1st percentile and social skills on the 3rd percentile. Due to his academic ability, he has not received the necessary support required to prepare him for adulthood. He is completely dependent on us to meet all basic needs and requires full parental support to access anything in the community. There is currently no post 16 provision that could meet his needs.'

The Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance informed the Committee that due to the complexity and detail required for the question, that they would respond to the questioner after the Meeting in writing.

The second question is outlined below:

'How are panel decisions transparent and due consideration given to these when there is no clarity on who sits on the panel, there are no minutes taken and/or shared, no reasons offered for decisions made and no appeal process?'

The questioner also provided the following background to their question –

Our lived experience is very important and the committee need to understand the background to my question - My two young people have education, health and social care plans reviewed in April but still not finalised - outcomes, needs and provision were discussed as working by all professionals at annual review. Panel have stripped provision from one - which leaves outcomes unable to now be met and still awaiting panel for the other.

Communication and waiting times are diabolical and having direct impact on children and young people, causing trauma to families.'

The Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance requested to provide a response after the meeting adding that it would be inappropriate to respond to individual cases in Scrutiny.

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The Director did however add that Education, Health, and Social care panels and Short Rate Panels did have decision letters which gave reasons for the decision and explained the appeals process.

The Director referenced the Change Programme Partnership the Council was working with, with the Department for Education who had asked for the Council to consider the parental understanding of panels, with the Trafford Parent Carer forum cited on this.

The third and fourth questions were submitted together and can be seen below:

'Referring to page 18 of the document pack regarding the Local Area SEND inspection states the following improvements are required:

"Leaders across the partnership should ensure that the SEND strategy is fully embedded across health, education and social care. They should tighten their strategic oversight so that all workstreams have equal clarity in how they are mapped out and organised. This is to reduce the disconnect and to improve accountability between strategy and practice."

"Leaders across the partnership should develop, deliver and embed a clear approach to address how they will support children and young people with a range of mental health and neurodiverse needs. This includes identification, assessment and support for children and young people, with or without a diagnosis."

How do you plan to undertake any improvements when the Local Authority services actively use the ultimate weapon of parent blame including perplexing presentations & fabric or induced illness (FII) as a mechanism to paralyse parents who have no other choice but to fight for their neurodivergent children?

With the rise of Emotionally Based School Non Attendance (EBSNA), burnout for NHS clinically diagnosed autistic children, and undiagnosed children with autistic profiling and the many families experiences of the lack of support, LA/ICB service failures and systemic culture belief in parent blame first, culture of covering up failures and the non-existence proactive approach to supporting families in crisis, we want officers to answer why there is no accountability whatsoever across social care, education and health services? Why is it acceptable to ignore questions submitted through complaints process and ignoring family trauma experiences in fact is used as evidence against parents?'

The Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance said a more detailed response would be provided in writing. In the meeting, the Director confirmed that the Council did answer complaints, with a RAG rating in place to ensure that the Council was on track with managing complaints, with an endeavour to learn from complaints also.

Regarding the EBSNA burnout, the Director informed Members of a Steering Group, significant work on the toolkit, and work done on a Greater Manchester level to support with this. Work had been ongoing across the partnership to

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resolve these issues, with the Trafford Parent Carer Forum being integral to some of this work.

The Director finished by saying that the service did not practice a culture of blame and if this were ever apparent, the Director confirmed that it would be challenged.

Councillor Procter requested that a copy of the questions and responses be provided to Committee Members after the meeting.

Councillor Maitland asked when questions had to be submitted by. The Senior Democratic Support Officer confirmed that they needed to be submitted by 4pm the working day before the meeting.

The Committee asked that any question received prior to the meeting be shared with the Committee.

Councillor Procter asked whether the deadline for questions could be moved earlier. The Senior Democratic Support Officer suggested that this be taken away.

The Corporate Director for Children's Services felt that the personal circumstances of the questions received were not appropriate to be answered in the Committee, with this making it difficult for the Service to respond in the meeting.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the questions and responses be noted.
- 2) That the Officers provided detailed written responses to the questioners outside of the meeting.
- 3) That questions be shared with the Committee when they are received, prior to the meeting.

51. LOCAL AREA SEND INSPECTION PROGRESS REPORT

The Corporate Director for Children's Services introduced the report and referenced slides which had been prepared which would take Members through some of the granular details of the report. These were to be shared with the Committee after the meeting.

The Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance provided the Committee with context behind SEND in Trafford. During the May 2024 census, there were 2237 pupils on roll with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which made up 5.09% of pupils, and 11.3% of pupils in receipt of SEND support. The Director highlighted how those with an EHCP was above the national rate and those in receipt of support as below. The total of EHCP's had seen an increase of 7.1% on the previous year. The Director also shared with the Board the six Ambitions in Trafford for SEND.

The Committee were informed of strengthened governance arrangements within the Council, including an Independent Chair of the Strategic SEND Partnership

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Board, a strengthened Ambitions plan including greater oversight and dedicated workstreams, a performance scorecard which was reported at every strategic Board, and the Chief Executive and Lead Member Assurance group that the service reported to.

The Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance informed Committee that the presentation focused on the four areas that were identified in the inspection as areas for improvement.

The first looked at the Council's SEND Strategy being fully embedded, which involved ensuring work streams, governance and performance monitoring was in place, with the Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance outlining the key progress seen so far which included performance metrics which had been identified and additional performance clinics now in place. Regarding the next steps, the SEND week of action was planned for November, work was required on developing a user-friendly version of the Ambitions Plan, and the development of the Workforce Strategy. A further objective was to develop the SEND Commissioning Strategy, with progress so far shared, which included the refreshed Trafford SEND Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) and a SEND Commissioning workshop, due to take place later in the week.

The second area for improvement identified had been in improving the transitions for children and young people between Adults and Childrens services. The SEND Improvement Lead identified progress so far. This included preparing for adulthood (PfA) workshops which had taken place with others planned, with plans to develop a jointly agreed transition strategy and set of practice guidance around PfA. It also included improving the complex pathway into adults social care, and specific progress made in the Neighbourhood pathway and the Mental Health pathway, with more work to be done in both spaces. The Improvement Lead also mentioned the next steps and plans moving forward, including good timely transition on what EHC's looked at, improving the quality assurance framework which was reported through the learning improvement group. The Improvement Lead highlighted progress in audit processes, however, referred to further work required regarding Annual Reviews.

The Corporate Director for Children's Services felt the work on Annual Reviews was a significant learning and change from when they arrived at the Council, with a question often asked of the service of how it monitored its quality and consistency. Despite their being a small sample size at present, the Corporate Director applauded how it would allow the Council to challenge its own practice and take steps forward for improvement.

The third area of improvement was to make sure the service was delivering an approach to support mental health and neurodiverse needs. The Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance highlighted the work progressed so far, which included the commissioning of a pre- and post- diagnostic offer, and a challenge to, and support for, mainstream schools around the culture of children with autism in schools. There had also been funding secured for a SEND

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Navigator, who would act as a single point of contact to provide timely and accurate advice for families.

The final point was to enhance the voice of children and young people and the SEND Improvement Lead highlighted the Greater Manchester Youth Voice, which explored the experience of children and young people in Trafford. Another project had also been commissioned to deliver SEND youth panels which was to be mobilised in the coming week, who would sit strategically alongside the SEND Board and influence this. Other progress which had been made included evidence of stronger focus on children and young people's views in EHCPs and agreement for a SEND Participation Officer. In terms of next steps, the Improvement Lead highlighted the short break opportunities and the need for this to become more equitable.

The Chair thanked Officers for the report and asked if the service had statistics of children and young people transitioning from children to adults' services who were currently Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET). The Chair also asked what the current wait time was for EHCPs.

The SEND Improvement Lead confirmed that data on NEET was collected but did not have it to hand. However, the Improvement Lead confirmed that the understanding of the information and numbers were strong, with work such as the reconnect service undertaken in youth engagement. Comparatively, the Improvement Lead confirmed that the numbers of NEET young people was low.

The Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance added that there had been a growth in NEET. The Council was looking at the supported internship programme. The Lead for SEND and Inclusion confirmed that the Council had a SEND employment forum running for 18-months, which had an action plan which was overseen nationally. Nationally, the aim had been for Councils to double the number of available supported internships, with Trafford having a successful programme already, ten places in a hospital and ten within the Council itself.

The Corporate Director for Children's Services informed the Committee that the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and Ofsted feedback on PfA was to offer greater opportunities for aspirations, such as leisure opportunities, with the Council needing to think about the broadest possible outcome.

On EHCPs, the Lead for SEND and Inclusion responded that there was not a wait list, the Council had six weeks to make a decision and was measured on a 20-week completion process, which currently ran at 52%. The Lead confirmed that there was a restructure in the team to provide greater support, with a desire to measure how long the process goes on after the 20-weeks, with some going up to 30. The Lead felt the area for the greatest improvement was the Annual Review. The Chair responded that up to 30 weeks was a long time. The Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance added that 20-weeks was statutory, and Trafford was above national timeliness, but remained an area for improvement. The SEND Improvement Lead confirmed that the restructure was increasing the capacity in the team, hoping that this would improve the timeframe.

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On CAMHS, the Specialist Commissioner – Children’s Clinical Commissioning informed the Committee that children had a first appointment in the first four weeks, between 97 and 99% on average each quarter. Currently, the longest wait time was 52 weeks, but provided context that the core CAMHS service provided follow up within 72 hours of a child presenting to hospital in crisis, which increased demand.

Councillor Ennis reminded Members of the last Government pay deal, which was unfunded leading to schools having to cut staff hours, and asked what the impact that this was having and if there was any data on the impact of the deal, such as how much 1-on-1 time had been lost. Councillor Ennis also asked what practical difficulties the Council was having in offering the right post-18 placements for young people, wanting to know about the advice young people received and any backlog in terms of processing. Finally, Councillor Ennis asked if previous issues of inadequacies of joint-working arrangements in delaying EHCPs being finalised, had been remedied.

The Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance responded that the pay deal data would need to be looked into, with the Council possibly not having it. The Director, however, recognised the difficulties in workforce, and outlined the top-up banding approach. The Corporate Director for Children’s Services added that pay and resource was not a linear process, with a focus being on improving the quality of EHCP to ensure that they were meaningful and individualised, with detail asked for by Councillor Ennis would need to be taken away and shared with them. The Director confirmed that the Council was aware of the importance in securing effective SEND support in schools.

The Lead for SEND and Inclusion referred to Ambition three of improving inclusive provision, and highlighted some work undertaken on the Greater Manchester (GM) level, which included a universal approach to what would like to be seen in every classroom.

The SEND Improvement Lead responded that SEND data was lagging behind social care data, with a need to improve the quality of data reporting. However, the Improvement Lead did refer to an exciting development which would provide a richer picture but recognised that more could be done through the Annual review process, to consider how the Council matched opportunities in a more sophisticated way and ensured that the Council could offer the right post-18 placements.

On EHCP finalisation, the SEND Improvement Lead informed that a recent meeting had suggested that this joint working was improving, having been raised by speech and language therapists in the past. The Improvement did, however, mention that there were complications in the templates used for advice, with these not always lining up with what happened in the plan. There was a Governance structure, developed by health colleagues which aimed to monitor advice better moving forward.

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The Corporate Director for Children's Services raised that the process needed to be deconstructed, starting from the point of how the service alerted health professionals and how different recording systems spoke to each other, to ensure that advice was received in a timely manner and landed with the right health professional in the right way. The Corporate Director felt the work done had so far been extensive, which had made a complicated process more serious.

Councillor Hirst felt the outcomes of the report spoke significantly about what was being done at a strategic level, such as panels, measurements, and dashboard, but felt parents found delays in communication with EHC Coordinators and social workers was where parents were struggling. Councillor Hirst asked what the Council was doing to make sure it recruited and retained high quality staff.

The SEND Improvement Lead referred to the Workforce Strategy and the desire from the service to ensure that staff had the required skill sets. The hope was that the strategy would have a co-production element, which took account of lived experience to ensure that it considered who was trained and what they were trained in, as well as understanding how this was working. The Improvement Lead hoped the restructure would make the service much clearer on how to communicate and when to communicate to families.

The Corporate Director for Children's Services added that there was significant workforce development ongoing within the integrated neighbourhood teams and within the 'family help, family hub' model. The Corporate Director also considered the different levels and layers to workforce development which might have looked differently in diverse service areas. The Corporate Director was also excited about SEND Champions, which were to be included in every social work team, and how the Designated Social Care Officer (DSCO) had been influential in bringing SEND alive. The desire was to ensure that SEND was everybody's business.

Councillor Procter felt it was incredible that there would be no need to wait for a diagnosis before action could happen for a child, but asked how this would work. Secondly, Councillor Procter referred to page 20 of the report, where parental feeling was strongest that transition reviews did not work in the way it should, and asked how the Council would change that. Councillor Procter mentioned that she could not access the Padlet link in the report and asked whether this could be shared. Referring to section three, Councillor Procter asked what the targets and evaluation plans were for measuring the improvement to the annual review process. Councillor Procter asked finally why the Council only quality assure a sample of 30 EHCP plans, which was less than 1%.

The SEND Improvement Lead responded that six plans were for multi-agency auditing, with the other 24 being done by the Improvement themselves, highlighting that it took a significant amount of time every quarter. However, the Improvement Lead assured Members that this was only a small part of the quality assurance process, with a process attached to every EHCP, with the DSCO auditing social care input into the plans every single month. The Improvement Lead further reassured Members that this was not the only assurance ongoing, just the independent side.

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On the Annual Review process, the SEND Improvement Lead highlighted statutory requirements that meant a plan had to happen every twelve months, with parents notified within four weeks of a decision. Nationally, the Improvement Lead confirmed that this did not perform well, however, notified the Member of a task and finish group that had been set up as part of Ambition three, which was to look at how the review worked, with significant activity time lined.

The SEND Improvement Lead recognised the strong feeling from parents on the transition process. The Improvement Lead highlighted positive conversations which had taken place on transition from years six to seven for SEND. The Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance added that the lived experience of families had been played back to school leaders, recognising the several reasons behind the complexity of transition and the several themes which were presented. The Director referred back to what the inclusive practice should look like and recognised the need to tackle this. The Corporate Director for Children's Services provided further reassurance of the ongoing work, with a mainstream secondary school headteacher being the Chair of the Secondary Heads board, which was proving to be helpful in supporting the services' influence, with the lived experience being taken back into schools.

The Specialist Commissioner – Children's Clinical Commissioning reassured the Member that there had been several different access links developed for families to access the Padlet, and would send these to the Senior Democratic Support Officer after the meeting to share with the Committee via email.

On the diagnosis, the Specialist Commissioner – Children's Clinical Commissioning responded that it was a good question, with different localities across GM starting from different points, however, there would be fundamental principles integrated across the region. The Specialist Commissioner shared a number of those fundamentals, including a support hub with single referral for families to access support, involving webinars, workshops, focus groups, and coffee mornings, as well as more targeted support such as one to one's. The Specialist Commissioner hoped this showed the roll out of a suite of offers targeting different levels of needs. Other areas of work included the commissioning of a provider to run peer-to-peer workshops, development of a wellbeing wheel, ensuring mainstream schools were more inclusive, and the development of a training and support package.

Councillor Maitland asked how the service was sourcing the children's voice. The SEND Improvement Lead responded that the GM Youth Voice had found it difficult to get children to engage to start with, with data being used to better understand the plan. The Improvement Lead confirmed that it would involve going to the Children to engage rather than waiting for them to come to us, with a range of methods to be used. The Improvement Lead also added that existing knowledge in Trafford would be used, aligning the engagement to activities. The service also planned to look at patterns into what young people were consistently saying.

Councillor Sutton referred to section 2.3 of the report, with one of the key objectives being for needs to be met at the earliest opportunity. Councillor Sutton

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suggested the report discussed the earliest point as when a young person formally entered the SEND system but felt the earliest opportunity should be when the earliest informal identification of needs or concern were suspected, whether this was from parents, carers, teachers, support staff, or medical professionals. As such Councillor Sutton raised a gap between parents or carers noting particular traits to a child being flagged with a SENDCo, highlighting the case of girls with autism whose method of masking was keeping quiet and then going through school without the sufficient support. Councillor Sutton asked what was being done to close that gap and what learning was being taken from elsewhere.

Councillor Sutton referred to the Complex Pathway in section 2.2 of the report, with support applying to those people identified with an IQ below 70. Councillor Sutton felt this was a simplistic description, and hoped for reassurance that this was not being dealt with through a simple IQ test.

Finally, Councillor Sutton asked whether formal contact could take place between the Youth Voice, the SEND Youth panel and the Committee in the future once they were both up and running.

In response to the first question, the Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance felt the question played back to the expectations for mainstream practice for all pupils. The Director believed that there was a push to have mainstream practice to be impacting positively on young people who may be neurodiverse or have social, emotional, and mental health challenges, without them needing to formally enter the SEND system. The Director felt schools were not using the toolkit which had been developed to support emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA) and felt there was significant work to be done with schools and partners across health and social care to utilise the toolkit.

The Lead for SEND and Inclusion agreed that the approach the Council was trying to implement was a whole school approach for inclusion of neurodiversity in schools, with the Lead highlighting a number of links with other areas mentioned in the meeting including with the commissioning strategy, the neighbourhood pathway work, and the SEND Navigator role. The Lead for SEND and Inclusion added that the service was looking at training that could be rolled out, with some schools having taken up girls with autism training, with the Council hoping to make sure there was a regular rolling programme offer of training. The Lead also confirmed work of SENDCo's coming into schools, to look at enabling environments and doing learning walks around schools. The Lead for SEND and Inclusion wanted Members to know that several stakeholders were thinking hard about a whole school approach, recognised the importance of listening to parents, and rolling out targeted autism within schools.

The Specialist Commissioner – Children's Clinical Commissioning informed the Committee of an additional EBSNA offer being piloted, providing support to children, parents, and the schools in addition to the toolkit. The evidence for this was imminent, with outcomes of this hopefully supporting full school rollout from September.

On the Complex pathway, the SEND Improvement Lead confirmed that colleagues in adults' services did still work on a learning disability diagnosis, recognising that this was not something that happened to children. The Improvement Lead told the Committee of a monthly meeting and early alert system with a mechanism within the pathway to have a conversation between the Complex and neighbourhood team to discuss which adults service was most appropriate, without a young person having formal diagnosis.

On speaking with the youth panel, the SEND Improvement Lead did not think young people could talk to enough people and was more than happy to offer this opportunity once up and running.

The Corporate Director for Children's Services responded that Trafford was part of the Change programme which involved the council working with four GM authorities and leading on work in the Northwest, with the programme being national. The Corporate Director reassured Councillor Sutton that the Council was partaking in several learning opportunities, as well as contributing to, with other areas interested in Trafford's quality assurances.

The Chair thanked all Officers for the report.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the contents of the report be noted.
- 2) That the Senior Democratic Support Officer share the slides and Padlet links with the Committee after the meeting.
- 3) That any data on the impact of the pay deal be shared with Councillor Ennis outside of the meeting.
- 4) That a meeting with Youth Voice be explored once the group was up and running.

52. TASK AND FINISH GROUP DISCUSSION - SEND TRIBUNALS

The Chair reminded Members of the agreement in the previous Municipal Year to form a task and finish group looking at the cost of SEND Tribunals. The Chair asked Members if they had any suggestions for scoping.

The Executive Member for Children and Young People referred to a question from a Member in the full Council meeting the week prior, regarding how many tribunals there had been and how many Trafford had been successful in. The Executive Member felt this would be the best place for the group to start and to also look at the various steps parents take up until the point it reached tribunal.

Councillor Ennis agreed with the Executive Member but felt the recommendations of the piece of work should focus on what can be done to stop cases going to Tribunal, suggesting that many cases the Member had been involved in had not had enough intervention from the Council to mediate them going ahead.

The Chair recognised the stress for families going through the tribunal.

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Councillor Procter had been told that day there had been twenty since January, however, was unsure on the accuracy of that and did not know which stage as tribunal had three stages. Councillor Procter was concerned by the delay this caused in children getting the support they needed due to delays in the tribunal service and recognised both the emotional cost to families and the financial cost to both the Council and families involved.

The Chair also raised concern for the children who did not have somebody to advocate for them, with families not able to take the concerns to a certain level and might also be confused by the complex language.

Councillor Hirst felt the ideal start would be to speak to families and then take the work on from there. The Corporate Director for Children's Services advised the Task and Finish group that tribunals were a legal process, so it would be important not to speak to those currently going through it to not prejudice any outcomes for either the benefit of the family or child. As such, the Corporate Director felt there should be some considerations when gathering the lived experience.

The Director for Education, Standards, Quality and Performance confirmed the data as sixteen so far for 2024.

The Chair felt historical data could be used rather than live cases. The Corporate Director agreed there was mechanisms to collect that information, however, just did not want to cause any issues.

The Senior Democratic Support Officer outlined the process moving forward, which would commence with an initial scoping meeting after the Summer recess.

RESOLVED: That the Senior Democratic Support Officer contact interested Members to arrange a scoping meeting for the Group.

53. DRAFT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2024/25

The Chair asked Members to make suggestions for the remainder of the Municipal Year which would then be taken away and used to form the basis of the Committee Work Programme.

Councillor Hirst suggested safeguarding issues around home to school transport as well as support for children. Councillor Hirst highlighted issues with operators and the effect that had had on Children. Councillor Hirst also raised the problem of pastoral care on transport, with no training for drivers.

Councillor Parker referred to a report from the National Police Chief's Council that day, which had described recent figures of violence against women and girls in England as a national emergency and provided some of the detail from the report. Councillor Parker also raised the warning that young men and boys were being radicalised by online influencers. Councillor Parker wanted the report to look at what the Council was doing to address the rise of violence against girls and the prevention of the radicalisation of boys into misogyny. The Corporate Director for

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Children's Services recognised the necessity for this piece of work to bring in wider stakeholders, such as community safety partnerships and Greater Manchester Police.

Councillor Ennis suggested reports on Out of Term time provision and how the Council could support the Voluntary and Charity Sector with that, and also on the driving factors behind persistent and severe absences. The Executive Member for Children and Young People mentioned that this had been raised by Councillor Ennis at the Executive meeting and had discussed the item with the Corporate Director for Strategy and Resources that day for consideration.

The Senior Democratic Support Officer informed the Committee of the process behind forming the Committee Work Programme after the meeting.

Councillor Maitland asked for an update on transition from children to adults' services.

Councillor Sutton raised the issue Co-opted Members. Councillor Sutton suggested forming a task and finish group to look at this, for example changing the teacher representative Member to school staff representative, possibly including an offer for early years, care leavers, teaching assistants. Councillor Sutton also asked whether it could look at what had happened in the recent past and to look at how the Council recruits Members.

The Senior Officer reminded Members that the process was to be looked at over the coming months by the Governance team, with the Elections causing delays in commencing the work. The Corporate Director for Children's Services had confirmed conversations with the Legal and Governance team of the need to ensure that there was a mechanism in place on deciding who joined the Committee to ensure they are best placed to be a representative.

Councillor Procter reminded the Committee she had raised this matter previously and that she was aware of people who wished to support the work of the Committee.

As an additional work programme item, Councillor Procter recognised the presentation from the Trafford College student at the last Committee meeting and wanted a report on support for young trans people to come to the Committee.

Councillor Ennis echoed Councillor Sutton's point and asked whether the Constitutional Working Group, expected to meet again later in the year, as an appropriate body to look at the Co-opted Member positions.

Councillor Duncan informed the Committee that he was aware of a staff Member of Trafford College had contacted the Council about joining the Committee as a co-opted Member and wondered what the problem was with them joining. The Senior Democratic Support Officer confirmed the reason was due to the individual currently not meeting the criteria list as set out in the Constitution, but suggested that this could be considered by the working group.

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The Executive Member for Children and Young People did not think there was a mechanism to have the working group meet to discuss this, and hoped the Chair could make the suggestions themselves.

Councillor Procter suggested keeping the current positions, but asked whether the number could be increased.

Councillor Sutton recognised the Constitution restrictions, but referred to the Committee Terms of Reference, and felt the Committee could make recommendations to the Council to change the Teacher representative positions.

The Committee requested that The Corporate Director for Children's Services and Senior Democratic Support Officer to take the information regarding co-opted Members away and discuss further with the Legal and Governance Team.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Work Programme suggestions be considered by the Chair and Vice-Chair during the work programming meeting.
- 2) That the Corporate Director for Children's Services and Senior Democratic Support Officer discuss co-opted Membership with the wider Legal and Governance Team.

The meeting commenced at 6:30pm and finished at 8:46pm