

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

1 OCTOBER 2015

PRESENT

Councillor J. Coupe (in the Chair).

Councillors M. Cordingley (Vice-Chairman), R. Bowker, C. Boyes, C. Candish, K. Carter, L. Dagnall, Mrs P. Dixon, D. Hopps, D. Western, J. Lloyd (ex-Officio)

Also Present

Sister P. Goodstadt (Co-Opted Member)

In attendance

J. Pearce	Acting Corporate Director, Children, Families and Wellbeing
P. Forrester	Democratic and Performance Services Manager
C. Gaffey	Democratic and Scrutiny Officer

APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors S.K. Anstee

9. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 17 June 2015 be agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

10. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interests were made by Members.

11. PROPOSED EDUCATION SCRUTINY TOPICS FOR 2015-16

The Committee received a report of the Acting Corporate Director, Children, Families and Wellbeing, outlining the proposed education topics for the Scrutiny Committee to consider over the coming year. These topics had been suggested and discussed during an earlier meeting with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.

The report highlighted two topics which featured regularly when discussing education in Trafford. 'Closing the Gap' (aiming to reduce educational inequalities within the Borough), and 'School Funding' (Trafford being one of the lowest funded local authorities on a per pupil basis, which was beginning to have a significant impact on many schools within the Borough).

The Democratic and Performance Services Manager addressed an error in the report, explaining to Members that no Education Scrutiny Committee or Sub-Committee existed in Trafford. It was explained that the Scrutiny Committee considered education topics and any other matters not relating to Health (these were covered by the Health Scrutiny Committee). The reference to a 'Sub-Committee' was in relation to the Task and Finish Groups that would be formed to investigate the suggested topics. The Task and Finish Groups would consider the matter and would prepare a report for the Committee to consider prior to referral to the Executive.

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The Acting Corporate Director, Children, Families and Wellbeing answered questions from Members regarding out of Borough school attendees and school admission processes.

It was agreed that the two topics would be considered separately, one after the other. A Task and Finish Group would be formed to discuss 'Closing the Gap' as the first topic. Once the investigation into this topic had concluded, a new Task and Finish Group would be formed to discuss 'School Funding'. Members were asked to register their interest with Democratic Services if they wished to be a part of the Task and Finish Groups, as they would coordinate with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman on forming and organising the Groups.

The Acting Corporate Director, Children, Families and Wellbeing confirmed Officers within the Directorate would assist with the inviting of head teachers to be part of the Task and Finish Groups.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the two topics outlined in the report be agreed as areas for the Scrutiny Committee to investigate.
- (2) That the approach suggested in the report be agreed, incorporating the above comments.

12. HOME TO SCHOOL TRANSPORT - TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT

The Committee received a report of the Vice-Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee detailing the findings of the Home to School Transport Task and Finish Group.

Scrutiny of Home to School Transport was instigated as a result of difficulties encountered in late summer 2014 as a result of a reorganisation and revised procurement arrangements. Following an initial report on 26 November, 2014, the Vice-Chairman wanted to revisit the topic to see if the situation had improved. This report detailed the findings from a visit to Pictor School on 23 June, 2015, as well as discussions with Trafford Parents' Forum.

The report highlighted a big improvement in the situation since the issues encountered in the previous year, and it was felt that the problems arose more from how the changes were implemented as opposed to the nature of the changes themselves. However, following the school visit and discussions with Trafford Parent's Forum, eight recommendations were identified, which would be taken to the relevant Executive Member for a response.

The Acting Corporate Director, Children, Families and Wellbeing answered questions from Members. It was confirmed that the local authority had a statutory requirement to provide transport to children of statutory school age (5-16). Transport would only be provided to children outside of that age range in exceptional circumstances.

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It was confirmed that drivers were required to have enhanced DBS checks every three years. The responsibility of obtaining these DBS checks was the drivers' employers', which mirrored the process followed across the council when using outside agencies.

The Democratic and Performance Service Manager confirmed the report would go to the next Executive meeting. The relevant Executive Member would be required to prepare a response to the report and its recommendations to bring back to the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted by the Committee.
- (2) That the Committee endorse the recommendations set out in the report for referral to the Executive Member.

13. BUDGET SCRUTINY - PROCESS FOR 2016/17

The Committee received a report of the Democratic and Performance Services Manager outlining the proposed arrangements for Scrutiny to review the Executive's budget proposals for 2016/17.

Members were advised that the only significant change to last year's process was that discussions would be split into themes as opposed to separate discussions for each Directorate.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the approach to budget scrutiny be endorsed and that arrangements be circulated to Members when more information was available.
- (2) That authority to finalise the Budget Scrutiny Report be delegated to the Democratic & Performance Services Manager in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of this Committee.

14. ANNUAL DELIVERY PLAN 2015/16 - Q1 PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee received the report of the Acting Corporate Director, Transformation and Resources to the Executive which provided a summary of performance against the Council's Annual Delivery Plan 2015/16 for the period 1st April 2015 to 30 June 2015 (quarter 1).

The Democratic and Performance Services Manager advised work was being done to improve profiling and trend data for future reports.

The Committee agreed that it was useful for them to receive the ADP monitoring reports and the Chairman reported that he had spoken to the Leader about Executive attendance at Scrutiny meetings to answer any questions about performance. The Leader had indicated that he would arrange this.

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RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

15. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2015/16 - UPDATE

The Committee received a report of the Democratic and Performance Services Manager detailing the updated work programme for the 2015/16 municipal year.

Members requested that the Provision of Leisure within Trafford be added to the work programme, which was agreed by the Chairman.

RESLOVED:

- (1) That the update work programme be noted.
- (2) That Provision of Leisure within Trafford be added as an item on the work programme.

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 7.45 pm