

Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board

Monday, 30 September 2019, County Hall, Worcester - 10.00 am

Present:

Minutes

Mrs E A Eyre (Chairman), Mrs J A Brunner,
Mrs F M Oborski, Mr P A Tuthill, Mr R M Udall and
Mrs R Vale

Also attended:

Dr C Hotham
Mr M E Jenkins
Mrs J A Potter
Mrs E B Tucker, Group Leader 2017 Group

Sheena Jones (Democratic Governance and Scrutiny
Manager) and Samantha Morris (Scrutiny Co-ordinator)

Available Papers

The members had before them:

- A. The Agenda papers (previously circulated);
- B. The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 July 2019 (previously circulated).

(A copy of document A will be attached to the signed Minutes).

1114 Apologies and Welcome

The Democratic Governance and Scrutiny Manager explained that Cllr Chris Bloore had resigned as Chairman of OSPB on 2 September and as a councillor on 12 September. Council at its September meeting had deferred the appointment of the Chairman of the Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) to its November meeting and Councillor Richard Udall was appointed as the Labour representative to the Board on 12 September 2019.

The Vice-Chairman of OSPB took the Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from Mr A Adams and Mr A D Kent.

It was noted that the Co-opted Church Representatives (for education matters) rarely attended meetings and Officers were asked to follow this up.

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| 1115 | Declaration of Interest and of any Party Whip | None. |
| 1116 | Public Participation | None. |
| 1117 | Confirmation of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting | The Minutes of the Meeting held on 24 July 2019 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman. |
| 1118 | Draft Scrutiny Report: The Relationship Between the Family Front Door and Schools | <p>The Board was asked to consider and approve the draft scrutiny report on the Relationship Between the Family Front Door (FFD) and Schools.</p> <p>The Overview and Scrutiny Performance Board (OSPB) agreed to set up a Task Group at its meeting on 26 September 2018 led by Councillor Jane Potter, Vice Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel.</p> <p>The terms of reference for the scrutiny exercise were '<i>to investigate how the Service is currently working, taking into account the relationship between the County Council and School partners, and the progress made since the Ofsted Inspection and subsequent monitoring visits</i>'.</p> <p>Cllrs Potter, Hotham and Jenkins (members of the Scrutiny Task Group) attended the meeting.</p> <p>Cllr Potter introduced the report and in doing so highlighted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The significant improvements that had been made by Children's Services in the last three years, since the Ofsted Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers; and Review of the effectiveness of the Local Safeguarding Children Board. • The Task Group's concerns around communication issues with schools and parental consent. • That 30 questionnaires were received from a range of schools, colleges and academies (including first, primary, middle, high, short stay, independent schools and a further education college). The Members of the Task Group |

Members visited 15 schools.

- The Safeguarding Advisor – Education role was welcomed by schools and was a significant support to them.

Cllr Hotham also concurred that Safeguarding Advisor – Education was invaluable to schools and mentioned the role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL's) Champions Scheme, which was proving to be a helpful support to schools and would be good to expand. The Community Social Workers and Family Support Workers were also a valuable support to those schools that worked with them. In addition, Cllr Jenkins made the point that some schools rarely contacted the FFD and when they did, they were less certain of the process than those schools in frequent contact and referring regularly.

Cllr Potter thanked the members of the Task Group and Officers for their support and contribution to the work of the Task Group.

During the discussion, the following main points were made:

- It was suggested that the report was excellent, and the recommendations should be endorsed.
- A concern was expressed that if a family refused to give parental consent for a referral to be made to the FFD, the pathway was not clear. It was suggested that these children were most vulnerable, and it was important to find a way to help them.
- A member emphasised paragraph 20 of the Report, which highlighted the difficulty that schools sometimes faced in getting through to the FFD on the telephone at the start or end of the day as recognisable from her experience of her local school.
- Concern was expressed about the response rate from schools to the questionnaire sent to them and it was suggested that maybe the low response rate indicated that they were disengaging. Despite the low response rate however, it was suggested that the recommendations were excellent, and all schools would benefit from them.
- Recommendation 8 relating to awareness training for members on the FFD and early help was welcomed by members. Cllr Potter also mentioned that she thought that members would benefit from visiting the FFD.

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- In response to a member's suggestion that schools may be reluctant to make referrals to the FFD because they may feel that they were failing, Cllr Potter advised that this was not something that the Task Group had picked up on. Schools did however suggest that on occasions, the history relating to a case wasn't always considered by the FFD, as each case considered on its own merits. This was something that concerned schools.
- It was suggested that timescales and targets for the implementation of the recommendations adopted by the CMR would be helpful.

In Summary, it was agreed that OSPB fully endorsed the Scrutiny Report on the Relationship Between the Family Front Door and Schools and that the Report should be passed to Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 24 October 2019. It was suggested that it would be helpful if any recommendations adopted by the CMR could be given targets and timescales for implementation. The Board also wished to emphasise the importance of aspiring to engage and reach all schools.

The Board was asked to consider the feedback provided by Scrutiny Panel Chairmen following the discussion of Quarter 1 (April - June 2019) performance monitoring information and budget monitoring information and determine whether any further information or Scrutiny on a particular topic was required.

The Board was reminded that performance and financial monitoring was part of the Scrutiny Panels' role in maintaining oversight of service provision and a key role for Scrutiny. As previously agreed Scrutiny Panels would carry out quarterly performance and financial monitoring, and then report to the Board by exception any areas of concern or suggestions for further Scrutiny.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

Whilst acknowledging the role of HOSC in scrutinising local health bodies, it was agreed that in future quarters, HOSC would look the performance of Public Health and financial monitoring of the Public Health Ring-Fenced Grant (PHRFG).

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman of the Panel reported that the Director of Resources for Worcestershire Children First (WCF) had

reassured her that the same level of reporting could be expected for Children's Services when it transferred to WCF with effect from 1 October as had been provided when the services had been delivered in-house.

The focus for the Panel going forward would be on the areas that Ofsted had identified in its recent inspection as needing to improve.

With reference to the Dedicated School Grant, the High Needs shortfall remained something the County Council had in common with other local authorities. Work was ongoing with the Schools Forum on this. The Government had recently announced an additional £700m would be available to local authorities but this only covered one year. The Council would continue to lobby on this through the Society of County Treasurers.

It was suggested that some of the PI's relating to looked after children were also being reviewed by the Corporate Parenting Board and consideration should be given to ensuring each body had relevant oversight to its remit.

Adult Care and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman of the Panel reported that the revenue budget for Adult Services was currently predicting a £3.3m forecast overspend for 2019/20 which was 2.4% of the c£136m Adult Social Care net budget. The primary reason for the overspend related to Older Peoples Residential and Nursing Care activity and cost pressures (£2.8m) and one-off pressures.

Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman of the Panel had given apologies but provided an update which was read out at the meeting:

- The Head of Finance reported that the financial position for this Panel for Quarter 1 was showing a positive and improving position. There were a few areas of minor underspend, including savings achieved on the Place Partnership Limited contract and Quarter 2 was on track at the present time.
- The Panel was advised that on the Period 3 outturn forecast 'content and communications' related to some one-off work around professional advice in respect of children's services complaints.

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and Cabinet
Forward Plan**

- In terms of the Communities budget, there were no significant forecasted variances to report. The libraries savings were on track to be delivered.
- Performance on death and still birth registrations were showing consistent concern and a deep dive was requested by the Panel for November's meeting to understand fully the issues and strategy for solution.
- Other areas highlighted were complaints and further monitoring.

Overall, there was praise for the consistent performance and well-managed budget with registered concern on death registrations and complaints which have triggered a deep dive.

It was agreed for future meetings that Scrutiny Panel Chairmen should provide a written summary of the Performance and In-year Budget Monitoring for inclusion in the OSPB Agenda dispatch.

Budget Scrutiny Planning

It was agreed that a meeting would be set up between Vice Chairman and Chief Finance Officer to discuss the Budget Scrutiny process for 2020/21.

Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee (HOSC)

The Chairman of HOSC advised that an additional meeting had been scheduled for 8 October 2019 to consider Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust Care Quality Commission Inspection Report published on 20 September and a report on the development of the Trust's Clinical Services Strategy.

At its last meeting, HOSC had considered a report on dentistry and was expecting a summary of the services available in Worcestershire.

The Chairman of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel suggested some joint work with HOSC to look at the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) considering the existing service provision, what was needed (including the evening and weekend service) and the challenges faced by the Service. The Chairman of HOSC reminded the Board that the HOSC had previously looked at this Service. It was agreed that a scope for this work would be prepared and submitted to OSPB for approval.

Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman reported that the work on Future Provision of Overnight Unit-Based Short Breaks for Children with Disabilities had concluded and the Panel supported the recommendations in the Cabinet report and would wish to receive a further report on the service after the new model of delivery had been running for six months, to include levels of parental satisfaction.

Elective Home Education was the next in-depth piece of work that the Chairman was looking start

Adult Care and Well-being Overview and Scrutiny Panel

The Chairman's reported that at its last meeting, the Panel had looked at support for carers and had met with the Worcestershire Association of Carers and some parent carers. Arising from this discussion the Panel had identified that it wished to look into Continuing Health Care, which it was agreed could be added to the Panel's Work Programme.

The Quality Assurance Task Group was ongoing and visits to residential care and nursing homes had been undertaken and the Care Workers as a Career Task Group was just getting under way.

Crime & Disorder

The Lead Member for Crime & Disorder advised that following the Annual Crime & Disorder meeting in July, she was planning to review the Council's policies which were within the crime and disorder remit.

It was noted that an Integrated Drug and Alcohol Service for Adults and Young People was being recommissioned and the Lead Member advised that she would wish to carry out some Scrutiny and feed comments into the re-commissioning process. It was agreed that the web link to the Cabinet Member Decision dated 12 September would be circulated to the Board for information.

It was suggested that it would be helpful if the Council's representative on the West Mercia Police and Crime Panel (PCP) could provide a regular report back to the Board following meetings of the PCP. It was agreed that Officers would get in touch with the Council's representative to request this.

Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny

Panel

The Chairman had submitted his apologies but had provided a written report for the Panel which was read out:

At the Panels recent meeting the County Council's Employment Policy and Procedure relating to bullying and harassment was discussed, the main points were:

- The Bullying and Harassment Policy had been introduced in September 2018 as part of a raft of new core employment policies. In keeping with the ACAS Code of Practice on Discipline and Grievances, a separate policy had been developed for bullying and harassment, whereas previously, these issues had been dealt with through the Council's grievance procedures.
- The importance of the Council's statement of commitment which set out a clear, strong message in simple language which was easy to understand.

A number of responses were made by members which are detailed within the minutes. The Chairman felt the Panel had clearly benefitted from their detailed examination of this Policy

The Panel also discussed Commissioning including the Development of the Procurement Strategy, the main points discussed were:

- The development of the Procurement strategy to enable a more efficient and effective approach to contract management.
- The Strategy to develop the skills of the current employees, which was being realised with some of the Procurement Team having now achieved the level 4 qualification. This investment in staff, blending qualifications, alongside practical experience was deemed to be the best way forward to ensure individual employees' personal development and the development of the Service. The CMR advised that it would also help with staff retention in the longer term.
- The Panel was informed that 12 months' notice had been given on the Civica contract. The Director outlined some of the issues, which would be considered in developing the Strategy for managing customers.
- The Head of Commercial provided a

demonstration of the Power BI management tool which captured every contract on the system and allowed detailed data analysis. Currently, the dashboard was being used to report on issues including contract liquidity and spend.

It was agreed that the Director would advise in due course, how the Panel could be involved in the development of this new strategy on the Civica contract. The Panel were very impressed with the new Power BI system, its capabilities and future potential. They could see how it would transform the Council's procurement work, allowing Officers to view trends, compare performance and have all the current data readily available to inform their work.

The Chairman commented that he was very pleased with the progress that had been made in this area and he thanked the Officers involved for their hard work and for the informative demonstration. It was agreed that the Panel would be provided with an update report on Commissioning and the continuing development of the Procurement Strategy at its March meeting.

It was agreed that the following additional items would be added to the Panels Work Programme:

- Gypsy Service
- Council Energy providers and costs following queries on competitive energy costs and procurement
- Civica contract re-commissioning
- Case management of councillor issues, monitoring and performance.

The meeting ended at 11.35 am

Chairman