

**Medway Council**  
**Meeting of Children and Young People Overview and**  
**Scrutiny Committee**

**Tuesday, 4 December 2018**

**6.30pm to 9.30pm**

**Record of the meeting**

**Subject to approval as an accurate record at the next meeting of this committee**

**Present:** Councillors: Aldous, Fearn, Franklin, Gilry, Johnson, Joy, Kemp, Opara, Paterson, Purdy, Royle (Chairman) and Wicks (Vice-Chairman)

**Co-opted Members with voting rights on educational issues only:**

Fay Cordingley (Church of England Representative)

**Added members without voting rights:**

MYC Chairman (Medway Youth Council), MYC Cabinet Member (Medway Youth Council) and Keith Clear (Medway Parents and Carers Forum)

**Substitutes:** Councillors:  
Bhutia (Substitute for Saroy)  
Price (Substitute for Cooper)

**In Attendance:** Kate Ako, Principal Lawyer - People  
Maria Beaney, Finance Business Partner, Education  
Paul Cottam, Principal, Waterfront UTC  
Tracey Creaton, Deputy Chief Nurse, NHS Medway CCG  
Ann Domeney, Deputy Director, Children and Adults Services  
Simon Harrington, Programme Lead, School Services  
Stuart Jeffery, Deputy Managing Director and Chief Operating Officer, Medway CCG  
Detective Supt. Andy Pritchard, Vice Chair, Medway Safeguarding Children's Board  
Teri Reynolds, Democratic Services Officer  
Ian Sutherland, Director of People - Children and Adults Services  
Emma Vecchiolla, Assistant Chief Probation Officer, Kent, Surrey and Sussex Community Rehabilitation Company  
Wendy Vincent, Head of Integrated 0-25 Disability Services  
David Watkins, Head of Education

## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 4 December 2018

### 566 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cooper and Saroy, Maggie Cane (Healthwatch Medway CIC), David Lane (Parent Governor representative) and Clive Mailing (Roman Catholic Diocese representative).

### 567 Record of meeting

The record of the meeting held on 12 November 2018 was agreed and signed by the Chairman as correct.

### 568 Urgent matters by reason of special circumstances

There were none.

### 569 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests or Other Significant Interests and Whipping

#### Disclosable pecuniary interests

There were none.

#### Other significant interests (OSIs)

Councillor Wicks declared an OSI in item 5 (Waterfront UTC) by virtue of his position as governor at the UTC and left the room during the discussion of this item

#### Other interests

There were none.

### 570 Waterfront University Technical College

#### **Discussion:**

The Principal of Waterfront University Technical College (UTC), previously named Medway UTC, introduced the report and provided a presentation which summarised the background of the UTC, its improvement journey to date and future aspirations for the school. It included changes that had been made to the governance structure, the school day, interventions for students, training for staff, the curriculum, the strength of the student voice, the improvements in performance and in the school's reputation.

Members then raised a number of questions and comments, which included:

- **Intake at September 2018** – The Principal explained that the UTC had recruited 55 students into Year 10 and 25 students into Year 12 and

## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 4 December 2018

added that the UTC was working hard to raise these numbers in future years.

- **Entry points to the school** – the Principal explained that from 2019 the school would be receiving students from Year 9, with a plan to move to taking students from Year 7 from 2020. The overall numbers at the school would be maintained and the Published Admission Number per year group would be reduced to accommodate the extra year groups. He added that it was now recognised nationally that the model of taking students in later years was difficult in terms of competing with schools where students have already established a solid connection.
- **Opportunities for children with Special Educational Needs (SEN)** – in response to a concern raised that the UTC did not offer as many opportunities for children with SEN the Principal explained that 26% of the students at the school were young people with SEN, which was higher than the national average. He added that the building had a lift for use by students with a disability and confirmed that there were no restrictions for children with SEN to access the UTC.
- **Partnership working** – in response to a question about partnership working the Principal explained that the Governance of the UTC had been restructured. There was now a Governing Body in place focussing on education and an Advisory Board which focused on partner involvement from businesses. In terms of partnership working with the Council, he explained that further assistance in relation to raising awareness of the UTC would be most beneficial, explaining that the School Admissions Service already circulated a letter to prospective students informing them of the UTC and what it has to offer, although it had been reported that some families were not receiving this letter. Some schools were accommodating in allowing the UTC to provide advice to students about what it can offer, other schools were much less cooperative.
- **Visit to the UTC** – The Principal was very supportive of Members of the Committee visiting the UTC and the Democratic Services Officer was asked to liaise with the school to arrange this.
- **Use of equipment** – in response to a comment made that some of the equipment at the UTC was not available to be used by students, the Principal confirmed that this had been the case when he arrived at the school at the beginning of the year but that all equipment was now utilised and he also welcomed opportunities to link with primary schools or community groups to provide opportunities of using the facilities at the school.
- **Class sizes** – in response to a question about class sizes, the Principal explained that class sizes were small, ranging from 15 – 26 students per

## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 4 December 2018

class. His ambition was to maintain small class sizes in order to maintain the quality of education provided to each student.

- **Support for the students of the 2017 cohort who did not gain the required grades** – in response to a question about how the students who did not receive the required grades in 2017 were being supported, the Principal explained that almost all of those young people moved into further study, an apprenticeship or employment.
- **Financial viability** – in response to a question about the schools financial viability, the Principal explained that the school was on a three year deficit plan, after which it should be financially secure.
- **Signage of the UTC** – in response to a comment about improved signage for the UTC to further promote it, the Principal explained there were plans in place to improve the signage, which permission was being sought for.
- **Gender balance** – in response to a question about gender balance of the students, the Principal explained that 20% of the students were girls. He added that the Assistant Principal was a great advocate for the UTC in promoting engineering and construction careers for females, being a female with a career in engineering herself. Further work was being done to raise awareness of the UTC and to recruit students of both sexes to the school.
- **Curriculum** – in response to questions about curriculum the Principal confirmed that the UTC would consider widening the curriculum as long as it was relevant in meeting the skill demand of the workforce locally. He also confirmed that as the school expands into accepting students in lower year groups it would be providing a wider range of subjects, such as languages and arts.

### Decision

The Committee noted the report and thanked the Principal of Waterfront UTC for his attendance and presentation.

### 571 Joint Targeted Area Inspection

#### Discussion:

The Director of People – Children and Adult Services and the Deputy Director, Children and Adult Services, introduced the report, setting out the key findings of the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI), which assessed Medway's response to protecting children who live with Domestic Abuse. He also welcomed the partners in attendance, explaining that this had been multi-agency inspection. The findings of the inspection had been published in a detailed letter on 3 August 2018 and required the agencies to provide a Written

## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 4 December 2018

Statement of Action by the 12 November 2018. He then updated the Committee, referring to a letter that had been received on 28 November 2018 from the Lead Inspector, which demonstrated the various inspectorates positive response to the Written Statement of Action and recognised the strong multi-agency approach in Medway.

Members then raised a number of questions and comments, which included:

- **Assessing impact** – A Member commented that the format of the report made it quite difficult for scrutiny Members to assess the impact of action taken. In response officers undertook to provide an update on progress made against the Written Statement of Action and suggested that this could include red, amber, green (RAG) ratings to help identify measures of progress. It was added that a sub group of the Medway Safeguarding Children Board was also monitoring impact.
- **Enquiries from MASH** – A church diocese education board representative raised concerns about the way schools (and other agencies) were alerted to enquires from MASH. She gave the example of an 'amber' rated enquiry which had to be answered in 4 hours but explained that this enquiry is received via email and the recipient might not always therefore be aware of it and suggested follow up calls would be helpful. Officers confirmed that live data recording was an area of focus for colleagues and that responses were tracked very quickly and chased as necessary.
- **Kent and Medway Domestic Abuse Strategy** – a Member referred to the strategy which was referred to at section 4.5 of the report and was due to be signed off by the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategic Group by the end of the year. It was requested that Committee Members have sight of the strategy and the Deputy Director undertook to circulate the strategy to the Committee members.

### **Decision:**

The Committee noted the report on the Joint Targeted Area Inspection, the action undertaken so far in Medway in relation to the findings of the inspection, as set out in Section 4 of the report and the next steps for Medway Council and partners as set out in section 5 of the report.

### **572 Update on Joint Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection**

#### **Discussion:**

The Deputy Director, Children and Adult Services and the Head of Integrated 0-25 Disability Services introduced the report which updated the Committee on progress made since the Joint Local Area Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Inspection which took place in December 2017. It was

## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 4 December 2018

explained that there were 8 areas of improvement action and officers summarised the weaknesses and the improvements being made, as detailed in the report. It was also reported that since the publication of the report, it had been announced that every local authority that had been required to provide a Written Statement of Action following such an inspection as this, of which Medway was one, would receive a follow up visit within 18 months.

Members then raised a number of questions and comments which included:

- **Improvement Board meetings** – clarification was provided that the meeting scheduled for December had been cancelled but that an alternative date was being sought and the Operational Group meeting was going ahead in December.
- **Parent and Carer Survey** – clarification was also provided that the survey was not co-produced with the Medway Parent and Carer Forum, although they were involved in its development.
- **Transition to adulthood** – it was explained that much work was going on to improve transitional arrangements for young people entering adulthood and the Medway Parent and Carers Forum was working closely with the local authority on this.
- **Future Demand** – in response to a question about the needs analysis of future demand for profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) SEN places, officers explained that the review of this and of alternative provision was ongoing. It was reported that concern had been raised during the inspection about the number of children being placed in out of area provision and work was underway to address this.
- **Supporting schools in identifying SEN** – officers explained that there was some variance amongst schools of over or under identifying SEN and officers were working with the relevant schools on this.
- **Transitional arrangements for SEN children** – concern was raised about the quality of information being shared between primary and secondary schools in relation to year 6 students with SEN. Officers confirmed that transition between primary and secondary was a big issue for some children and work was in place to develop a protocol to set out what should happen to manage the transition in the best way possible.

### Decision:

The Committee noted the report.

## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 4 December 2018

### 573 School Admission Arrangements 2020

#### Background:

The Head of Education and the Programme Lead – School Services introduced the report which set out the proposed admission arrangements for 2020. He drew the Committee's attention to the two proposed changes, as set out in section 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 of the report.

Members then raised a number of questions and comments, which included:

- **Summer born children** – in response to a question about the rules and options in relation to school admission of children born between 1 April and 31 August, officers explained that Medway had a specific protocol for this issue, which required parents who want to consider deferring entry of their summer born child to speak with the relevant school's Headteacher. If the Headteacher supported the parent's request, for the wellbeing of the child, then entry to school could be deferred up to the start of the following academic year.
- **Waiting lists and school spaces** – A Member asked a question in relation to how the Council supports schools and parents in terms of managing waiting lists. Officers explained that school place offers are initially made on national offer day but that there were a number of other processes following that which may enable a change in the school places offered. Parents and carers are given the right to appeal for a school place they applied for but were not offered and they were also able to request to go on the waiting list of a school they applied. The local authority held waiting lists for each school until 31 December of the main admission round year. After this date the waiting list details were passed to each individual school and it was then for each school to decide whether or not to maintain its waiting list as it was no longer compulsory at that point. The local authority used various methods to inform parents and carers of the options available if they are not satisfied with the school place offered on national offer day.

#### Decision:

The Committee recommended the proposed admission arrangements and schemes to the Cabinet for approval.

### 574 Draft Capital and Revenue Budget 2019/20

#### Discussion:

The Finance Business Partner introduced the report which provided an update on the progress towards setting the Council's draft capital and revenue budgets for 2019/20, which had been based on the principals contained in the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2018-23, approved by Cabinet in September 2018. It was explained that there was currently a gap of £4.4million but that officers

## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 4 December 2018

were continuing to work to close the gap and produce a balanced budget for full Council to consider and approve in February 2019.

Members then raised a number of comments and questions, which included:

- **Head of Safeguarding saving** – in response to a query it was confirmed that the £314,000 savings demonstrated in Appendix 1 was being replaced with an increase to the budget of £1.7m due to the current cost of placements.
- **More detail** – comment was made that although this report had provided more detail than previous years it was not considered to go far enough to enable the committee to provide fully informed comment and challenge and officers undertook to feed this back for future reports.
- **New special school provision** – in response to a query as to why the costs relating to the proposed new special school at the Cornwallis site was not reflected in the capital budget proposals, officers explained that this was because the financing of the project had not yet been finalised and the amount reflected in the budget would be the repayment which would depend on the terms and conditions yet to be agreed.

### Decision:

- 1) The Committee noted that the Cabinet had instructed officers to continue to work with Portfolio Holders in formulating robust proposals to balance the budget for 2019/20 and beyond.
- 2) The Committee noted that its comments would be forwarded to the Business Support Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2019.

## 575 Council Plan Performance Monitoring Report Quarter 2 2018-19

### Discussion:

The Deputy Director introduced the report which provided the Committee with a summary of performance in quarter 2 of 2018/19. She referred Members to the following highlights:

- performance relating to the recruitment and retention of social workers which was improving in the short and long term;
- The percentage of secondary schools rated good or better, which had reduced;
- The number of days between a child entering care and being adopted, performance of which had dipped, a contributory factor of which was a large sibling group being adopted by their long term foster carer.



## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 4 December 2018

Members then raised a number of comments and questions, which included:

- **Secondary schools judged to be good or better** – in response to a concern raised about performance of this target, officers confirmed that all except one secondary school were academies and the local authority therefore worked closely with the Regional Schools Commissioner in relation to supporting these schools. In relation to the one secondary school which was not an academy, the local authority had more power to work with the school and were supporting it on its improvement journey.
- **Excess weight in 4-5 year olds** – in response to a concern raised about the performance of this measure, which was significantly below target, officers explained that performance in weight of 10-11 year olds had improved and it was hoped to replicate that success.
- **Persistent absence from school** – in response to a question about why this data was unavailable, it was explained that the collection of this data was difficult as academies could not be forced to provide the local authority with this data. Work was being done to liaise with schools in collecting this information and further detail would be provided as part of the annual school performance report in March 2019. The Medway Parent and Carers Forum then raised the issue that some parents were unable to get their children to school due to anxiety issues or other significant problems. Officers suggested those families should liaise with the local authority to gain support to get those young people back to school if possible or to gain support to educate at home where necessary.

### **Decision:**

The Committee noted the report.

## **576 Work programme**

### **Discussion:**

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which provided the Committee with suggested updates to its work programme. She explained that the Medway Youth Council had requested that their item be considered in March 2019, as opposed to May/June 2019, as recommended in the report.

### **Decision:**

- 1) The Committee agreed the work programme as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, subject to the following changes:
  - a. To defer the Sufficiency Statement 2018 to the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 10 January 2019.

**Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 4 December 2018**

- b. To add a report regarding the arrangements of Governor Services provision to the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 10 January 2019.
  - c. To add a report on the outcomes of the Medway Youth Council Annual Conference to the March 2019 meeting of the Committee.
  - d. To defer consideration of the update report on tackling racism from the 10 January 2019 meeting to the May/June 2019 meeting of the Committee.
  - e. That the presentation of the Mind of My Own (MOMO) app be removed from the work programme and provided during member induction in May 2019.
  - f. That a report on the draft Children and Young People's Plan be added to the January meeting of the Committee.
  - g. That a report on the proposed safeguarding partnership arrangements be added to the March meeting of the Committee.
- 2) The Committee noted that a briefing note being circulated to members of the Health and Adult Social Care (HASC) Overview and Scrutiny Committee relating to the Medway Children and Young People Emotional Wellbeing Service will also be shared with this Committee.
- 3) The Committee recommended the appointment of Nicola Forrest to the position of a non-voting Headteacher on this Committee to the Chief Executive, following consultation with the Group Whips, for a two year term.

**Chairman**

**Date:**

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