

**Minutes of the Children's Services and Education  
Scrutiny Board**

**4<sup>th</sup> June, 2018 at 5.00pm  
at Sandwell Council House, Oldbury**

**Present:** Councillor Underhill (Chair);  
Councillors S Davies and M Y Hussain (Vice-Chairs);  
Councillors Akhter, Allen, Ashman, Hevican, M  
Hussain, Phillips and Shaeen.

Rev P French (co-opted member);  
Mrs T Majid (co-opted member).

**Apologies:** Councillor Hickey.

**In attendance:** Chris Ward (Director – Education, Skills and  
Employment).

**17/18 Declaration of Interest**

Councillor Allen declared an interest in relation to item 19/18 below in so far as it related to the Youth Service.

**18/18 Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 22<sup>nd</sup> March, 2018 be approved as a correct record.

**19/18 Work Programme 2018-19**

The Council's Director – Education, Skills and Employment attended the meeting and provided the Board with an overview of his directorate and areas of key activity. The Board was also informed that the recently appointed Director of Children's Services was due to start with the Council at the end of July.

From the comments and questions by members of the Scrutiny Board the following responses were made and issues highlighted:-

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- The new Director of Children's Services would manage the relationship between the Council and Sandwell Children's Trust as well as being part of the performance management arrangements.
- The Youth Services and commissioning of Children's Centres remained with the Council and a review was being undertaken by Cambridge Education to determine future delivery of these.
- The funding for Education, Health and Care Plans was managed through the Schools Forum. This was a growing area of pressure with an increase in the number of children with such Plans by 55% over the last four years.
- Following an increase in primary age children experienced in Sandwell five years ago there was a need for an increase in secondary school placements. Four such schools were either underway or planned within the borough.
- Sandwell had been able to retain a Residential Education Service even though many other local authorities had found it necessary to cut theirs due to austerity measures. In Sandwell the Service was operating successfully on a traded basis which meant that it self-funded.
- The Scrutiny Board would consider twice-yearly reports on the performance of Sandwell Children's Trust in accordance with the contract arrangements with the Trust.
- There had been a reduction in the 'top up allowance' for children with special educational needs, but the rest of the allowance funding had not changed. This decision had been taken by the Schools Forum to ensure balanced budgets could be achieved.

The Board thanked the Director for attending the meeting.

The Chair identified some outstanding elements of work from the 2017-18 municipal year that would need to be reported back to the Board. These included childhood obesity, children and adolescent mental health services and special educational need funding.

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**Resolved:-**

- (1) that the following items be included in a draft work programme for the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board:-
  - (a) Childcare sufficiency;
  - (b) School place planning;
  - (c) New Academy Developments;
  - (d) Cambridge Education review of Youth Service and Early Help
  
- (2) that Director – Monitoring Officer, in consultation with the Chair of the Children's Services and Education Scrutiny Board determine the best dates for the items to be included on the work programme to ensure efficiency and timeliness;
  
- (3) that subject to (2) above, the completed work programme be submitted to the Budget and Corporate Scrutiny Management Board for approval.

(Meeting ended at 5.59pm)

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