

MEETING:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	Tuesday, 26 March 2019
TIME:	2.00 pm
VENUE:	Council Chamber, Barnsley Town Hall

MINUTES

Present

Councillors Ennis OBE (Chair), G. Carr, Clarke, Clements, Frost, Gollick, Hand-Davis, Hayward, W. Johnson, Makinson, Phillips, Pickering, Sheard, Tattersall and Williams.

57 Apologies for Absence - Parent Governor Representatives

Apologies for absence were received in accordance with Regulation 7(6) of the Parent Governor Representatives (England) Regulations 2001 from Ms Kate Morritt.

58 Declarations of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest

There were no declarations of pecuniary or non-pecuniary interest.

59 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 26th February 2019 were approved as a true and accurate record.

60 Adult Skills and Community Learning (ASCL) Service Ofsted Inspection

The following witnesses were welcomed to the meeting:

David Shepherd, Service Director for Regeneration & Property, Place Directorate
Anne-Marie Holdsworth, Adult Skills, Employability & Community Learning Manager,
Place Directorate
Councillor Chris Lamb, Member of the ASCL Service Improvement & Governing
Board

David Shepherd introduced this item, informing the Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the findings of the recent Ofsted inspection of the Local Authority's Adult Skills and Community Learning (ASCL) Service. The report sets out the Service's journey from initial inspection in 2016 (judged 'requires improvement') through to the most recent inspection, judged 'good'. It was highlighted that the report is a good news report, with the service showing significant improvement and better outcomes for all. The inspection found the Service to be 'good' across the following judgement areas:

- Overall effectiveness
- Effectiveness of leadership and management
- Quality of teaching, learning and assessment
- Outcomes for learners

- Adult learning programmes

The inspection recommended that the quality of English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and English provision should be improved to enable a higher proportion of students to achieve their qualifications. It was reported that the next inspection would now be a 'lighter touch' due to the favourable judgement received this time.

In the ensuing discussion, and in response to detailed questioning and challenge, the following matters were highlighted:

An effective marketing and publicity strategy is in place to promote the services offered by Adult Skills & Community Learning. This includes connecting with organisations targeted to engage with non-traditional media advertising and those who work with migrant workers, shift workers etc. A lot of work has been done to ensure ongoing attendance.

Effective use is made of volunteers where appropriate, particularly in ESOL, where stand-alone classes are being developed to enable students to practice English through conversation with volunteers. The Service is always looking for volunteers to support students in this way.

Investment has been made in a data system which allows the tracking of learner progress through robust assessment. This has been a focus of the improvement board for the last couple of years as the previous IT system was not effective enough to do this. However, it is not just about data collection but also to improve the learner experience and the service is now in a much better place.

Staff and service users have been involved every step of the way in the improvement journey. The process started by looking at strengths and weaknesses of the service and asking staff how this could be improved. Some difficult conversations took place where staff performance required improvement but on the whole staff felt that the inspection and subsequent improvement experience was positive. Staff turnover was historically low but 25% of staff left as a result of the inspection. Posts have been recruited to, with some specialist posts still to be filled. Learners have been involved and their views and experiences captured through learner feedback and Learner Forums.

Declining learner numbers have impacted on the service's ability to generate income in line with the contract. This also reflects the national picture. Learner numbers, particularly on leisure based courses, have declined as people are unwilling to pay a fee. There are two strands to delivery against the contract – grant funding and earned income linked to qualifications. Work in communities is grant funded, such as the Integrated Pilot project in the Dearne for people with mental health problems. Some work is done centrally, such as enabling volunteers to get a food safety qualification. Courses are designed to meet specific needs, such as positive thinking for parents of young children. A number of courses have been developed at Smithies, such as English and Maths skills to help with career progression and getting people back in to work. There is a need to improve the business and increase opportunities. A number of avenues are being explored in conjunction with partners and the Service is confident that improvement will be sustained. There are

also opportunities for Members to be involved and take ownership to drive forward improvement.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Witnesses be thanked for their attendance and contribution, and
- (ii) Members note the report.

61 Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) Task and Finish Group (TFG) Reports 2018/19

The Chair introduced this item, explaining that the reports presented to the Committee summarise the investigations undertaken into:

- Social Housing - led by Cllr Gail Charlesworth;
- Substance Misuse - led by Cllr Gill Carr; and
- Adult Mental Health Crisis Care - led by Cllr Paul Hand-Davis.

It was highlighted that the reports are a culmination of good work undertaken by Members, scrutiny co-optees, officers, service users and partnership agencies which have resulted in each group being able to make recommendations to improve services for communities, and have been brought to the Committee to promote the work of the TFGs and increase Members' awareness of different services in the Borough. Once approved by the committee, the reports will be submitted to Cabinet.

Social Housing TFG

The Chair highlighted that this TFG had reviewed Social Housing provision in Barnsley, including how challenges of supply and demand are being met; how tenancies and estates are managed by local social housing providers; as well as how the needs of our most vulnerable residents are being met. The TFG also considered current work, future plans and made a number of recommendations in support of further improvement.

Substance Misuse TFG

Councillor Carr, as Lead TFG Member, introduced this report, highlighting that the TFG had undertaken a review of Substance Misuse in Barnsley, with consideration for both adults and young people in relation to support services, prevention work, community safety and enforcement, highlighting the valuable multi-agency partnership work which takes place to support our most vulnerable citizens.

Adult Mental Health Crisis Care TFG

Councillor Hand-Davis, as Lead TFG Member, introduced this report, drawing Members' attention to the key findings and recommendations resulting from the investigation, including understanding the broad spectrum of mental health illness and related services, which led to a specific focus on crisis care. The group met with a variety of local service providers and commissioners to challenge service provision

as well as gain a greater understanding of the complexities involved, not least that incidents often occur out of office hours with the busiest time for mental health calls being in the evening and at weekends.

RESOLVED that:

- (i) Members, co-optees and all those involved in the TFG investigations be thanked for their hard work and contributions;
- (ii) The Committee approves the TFG reports (and recommendations therein) with regard to Social Housing, Substance Misuse and Adult Mental Health Crisis Care, and
- (iii) The individual reports now be submitted to Cabinet.