

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL

A meeting of the Children and Young People's Learning Scrutiny Panel was held on 11 April 2018.

PRESENT: Councillors J Blyth, L McGloin, G Purvis, M Storey, Z Uddin, J A Walker and M Walters

OFFICERS: J McNally
A Williams

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE B Carr - Member of Youth Parliament, Councillor D Davison, Councillor J Young.

DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest made by Members at this point of the meeting.

17/26 MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL - 14 MARCH 2018

The minutes of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel held on 14 March 2018 were submitted and approved as a correct record.

17/27 DRAFT FINAL REPORT - LISTENING TO THE VOICE OF THE CHILD

The scrutiny panel considered the draft final report in respect of its investigation of Listening to the Voice of the Child.

Following discussion, Members approved the content of the report and agreed the conclusions and recommendations for submission to the Executive.

AGREED as follows:

That the following conclusions be included in the scrutiny panel's final report:

1. The types of participation namely individual, social and public which were identified as best practice in other local authorities are all undertaken by Middlesbrough Council. However it was noted that work
2. The Panel acknowledges that there is currently a large amount of good work being undertaken within the Council, however this is primarily focussed on Children's Services.
3. Whilst some children/ young people are aware of their rights the Panel felt that all children and young people in Middlesbrough need to know what their rights are.
4. From the evidence gathered by the Panel when speaking to young people, the Panel Members felt very strongly that although engagement did take place, young people's views were not always acted upon, making them reluctant to participate.
5. The panel felt that methods of engagement with children/young people need to be reviewed to include responsible use of social media and technology as a means of engagement.
6. In Middlesbrough the availability of forums for children/young people to express their views and have an opportunity to have a voice, discuss relevant issues and engage with decision making, is limited. The forums that do exist tend to be for children currently accessing services rather than for all children/young people in Middlesbrough.
7. The contribution made by the Member of Youth Parliament during this scrutiny panel review was felt to be invaluable. Based on the information presented by the Member of Youth Parliament, it is clear that the establishment of a Youth Council in Middlesbrough would be beneficial to the children/young people of the town.

That the following recommendations be included in the scrutiny panel's final report:

1. The Panel feels that a "Top Tips" for Working with Children/Young People should be developed in conjunction with children/young people. This should then be embedded in all departments that work with children and young people.
2. An e-learning module on the importance of child participation is developed or alternatively a conference is held for staff to attend to ensure that all relevant Council staff understand the importance of child participation.
3. Young people should be involved in the recruitment process of staff who will be working with children and young people. This will ensure that the views of young people are taken into account on what qualities and skills they feel individuals should possess.
4. The number of forums in Middlesbrough for children/young people who are not currently engaged in statutory services to express their views is limited. The Panel recommends that an annual conference is held for all youth groups to come together to discuss current issues and express their views.
5. The Panel recommends that the Member of Youth Parliament is supported to develop a Youth Council. All schools and academies should be invited to become active members on the Youth Council. The Panel also strongly agreed that once the Youth Council is established it should be provided with its own budget to be used to support campaigns, training, activities and participation and is to be used at the sole discretion of the Youth Council. The Panel also recommended that the Voice of the Child Participation Coordinator be awarded a budget to support the work around child participation.
6. Once a Youth Council is established, its Chair or Vice Chair should be invited to attend Full Council. The Panel recommended that the Youth Council have a standing item on its agenda to provide updates on its work that can be fed back to Middlesbrough Council.
7. To ensure that all children and young people in Middlesbrough are aware of their rights, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (child friendly) poster is displayed in all Council buildings that are accessed by children/young people. All schools in Middlesbrough should also be encouraged to display the poster. It was recommended that a mapping exercise is carried out as to where information can be accessed on children's rights and emailed to all schools and academies.
8. As well as displaying the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child poster it is also recommended that a child friendly leaflet "Do you know your rights?" is produced and given to all children/young people accessing Middlesbrough Council services.
9. A young person should become a co-opted member on the Children and Young People's Trust to ensure that the voice of the child is embedded into the aims and values of the Trust and that it is reflected in plans and strategies developed by the Children and Young People's Trust.
10. That a child friendly version of the Scrutiny Report on Listening to the Voice of the Child is produced and posted on the Children's Services section of the Middlesbrough Council website.
11. The use of Social Media to engage with children/young people should be explored.

That the final report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for consideration.

The Chair of the Children and Learning Scrutiny Panel thanked Ben Carr, Member of Youth Parliament and also the young people from the Linx Project in Hemlington for their support during the Panel's investigation.

17/28

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD UPDATE

The Chair presented an update on the matters that were considered at the Overview and Scrutiny Board meeting held on 10 April 2018. The Chair provided the Scrutiny Panel with information in respect of the following items:

- Budget and Balanced Scorecards - Position at Q3 2017/18
- Aster Care Report

- Final Report - Environment Scrutiny Panel - Fly Tipping and Enforcement
- Executive Forward Plan
- Scrutiny Panel Progress Reports

AGREED as follows:

- That the update be noted