

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT 6.00PM, ON  
MONDAY, 11 NOVEMBER 2024  
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

**Committee Members Present:** Skibsted (Chair), Dowson, Geraghty, Hemraj, Hillier, Jenkins, Ray and Warren.

**Youth Councillors:** Pranav Aggarwal

**Co-opted Members:** Canon Andrew Read and Parish Councillor Jane Taylor-Pitt

**Officers Present:**

Daniel Snowdon, Democratic and Constitutional Services Manager  
Libby Walker – Head of Service – Admissions, Attendance & Transport  
Rachel Floyd – Head of Capital & Place Planning  
Sara Graves, Service Director, Targeted Support & Safeguarding  
John Gregg, Executive Director for Children’s Services

**21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Blakemore-Creedon, Bisby, Asif Shaheed and Khan. Councillors Dowson and Ray were in attendance as substitutes.

Apologies were also received from Independent Co-opted Members Sameena Aziz and Andy Stone.

**22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS**

Independent Co-opted Member Andrew Read declared his interest as the Chair of the Management Board for the Virtual School for Peterborough.

**23. MINUTES OF THE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 2 AUGUST 2024 AND 23 SEPTEMBER 2024**

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 August 2024 and 23 September 2024 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

**24. CALL-IN OF ANY CABINET, CABINET MEMBER OR KEY OFFICER DECISION**

None were received for this meeting.

**25. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Chair introduced the report which included the latest version of the Council’s Forward Plan of Executive Decisions containing decisions that the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the forthcoming month. Members were invited to comment on the plan and where appropriate, identify any

relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's Work Programme.

- Members were requested an update on the Delivery of Hydro Pool Conversion to SEN classrooms at Heltwate St Georges – KEY/07OCT24/01 as the hydrotherapy pool had been demolished over a year ago.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the current Forward Plan of Executive Decisions and RESOLVED to note the report.

The Committee also requested an update on the progress of the Delivery of Hydro Pool Conversion to SEN classrooms at Heltwate St Georges – KEY/07OCT24/01 decision.

## **26. CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT: ACTION PLAN AND PROGRESS MONITORING**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation the monitoring and progress in respect of Children's Services Ofsted Inspection Action Plan, implemented following the ILACS inspection which took place from 27th November to 8th December 2023.

The Service Director, Targeted Support & Safeguarding introduced the report and was happy to move straight to questions.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members were advised that the reliance on agency staff had reduced, and two engagement sessions had been held to see if they would join the Council permanently.
- Members referred to the proportion of Care Leavers who are in Education, Employment or Training (EET) and were advised that it could spike at this time of year due to the children starting college.
- The Officers assured Members that they were engaged with the children and the university had worked with the college to ensure that the jobs on offer were relevant for Peterborough.
- Members referred to the timetables of the buses and were advised that discussions were taking place with the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (CPCA) to ensure best access to educational settings.
- The report gave an oversight on the progress against the improvement plan and there had been a stronger and permanent senior leadership team working collaboratively to deliver the improvements.
- Members referred to 1.14 on the action plan and the peer review recommendations. Members were advised that those recommendations formed part of the LGA Peer Review report and an update report would be brought to the January 2025 meeting.
- Members noted that there had been a request to include kinship carers within the revised corporate parenting structure.
- Members were assured that all key partners had a voice within the improvement plan.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee reviewed the content of the report and agreed to continue to support officers in delivering continuing improvement.

## **27. ADMISSIONS AND PLACE PLANNING**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation the Admissions and Pupil Place Planning process and the reasons for the mainstream and special place pressures the Local Authority is currently experiencing.

The Head of Service – Admissions, Attendance & Transport accompanied by the Head of Capital & Place Planning introduced the report and moved straight to questions.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Members raised confusions are the lack of school building compared to the growth in the city. The Officers advised that place planning was based on understanding the need in each of the planning are. This included discussions with headteachers and a review of the demographics and trends.
- Officers had begun work to investigate repurposing buildings and would be transparent throughout that process. This would lead to a development of a 3–5- year plan.
- Members were advised that the data collected included births, registration at local surgeries, net migration into the city and the multiplier from development and local plans.
- Members requested the data on the number of families with children at different schools.
- Some parents had felt that that only option had been to home school their children and there would now be a statutory list to support local authorities to manage and monitor home learning.
- Members acknowledged that this had been a complex problem and were advised that schools worked together across Peterborough but that the collaboration stopped at a point as each school would have its own priorities.
- Members noted that the provision of SEN places was a nationwide issue and were advised that Officers were aware that it was important for these children to be educated within their communities.
- Members noted that there were 44 children placed out of county and requested a briefing note with an explanation as to whether it was because there were not any places or whether they were closer to the family home.
- A local authority could not force an increase of capacity, however, the schools adjudicator had ruled against a trust where the academy had been found to take the space out of the system and did not put it back when the LA had made a request for them to do so.
- Members queried whether the high proportion of academies had led to the limited capacity as it impacts an educating authority's ability to manage places. Members were advised that it was dependent on the relationship with the academy, and this relied on management of those relationships and soft skills.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee reviewed and commented on the approach to admissions and place planning, and endorsed the approach taken by Officers.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee requested that Officers:

- Provide the data that details the number of families with children at different schools.
- Provide a briefing note on the out of county SEND placements with an explanation as to whether it was because there were not any places or whether they were closer to the family home.

## **28. MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS REPORT**

The Officer introduced the report which enabled the committee to monitor and track the progress of recommendations made to the Executive or Officers at previous meetings.

- Members acknowledge the important of Ofsted but noted that there was a risk that focus had moved away from other areas. Members agreed to consider items on the work programme at the next group representatives meeting.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the responses from Cabinet Members and Officers to recommendations made at previous meetings as attached in Appendix 1 to the report and provided feedback including whether further monitoring of each recommendation was required.

## **29. WORK PROGRAMME 2024/2025**

The Officer introduced the report which looked at the work programme for the municipal year 2024-2025 to determine the Committees priorities. Members were invited to make comments and suggestions.

- The work programme was noted.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee RESOLVED to note the work programme.

## **30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as being the 11 November 2024.

CHAIR

Meeting started at 6.00pm and finished 7.42pm