

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CREATING OPPORTUNITIES AND TACKLING INEQUALITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD IN THE
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOM, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH
ON 11 NOVEMBER 2013**

Present: Councillors S Day (Chairman), C Harper, B Rush, J Shearman, N Sandford

Also present

Alastair Kingsley	Co-opted Member
Matthew Purcell	Youth Council
N Kingsley	Youth Council
Councillor Sandford	Leader of the Liberal Democrats
John Harris	SLE Associates

Officers in Attendance:

Sue Westcott	Executive Director, Children's Services
Jonathan Lewis	Assistant Director Education and Resources
Gary Perkins	Head of School Improvement
Jawaid Khan	Cohesion Manager
Ray Hook	Performance and Information Officer
Paulina Ford	Senior Governance Officer, Scrutiny
Marie Southgate	Lawyer

1. Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Saltmarsh, Councillor Fower and Councillor Nawaz. Councillor Sandford was in attendance as substitute for Councillor Fower.

2. Declarations of Interest and Whipping Declarations

There were no declarations of Interest or whipping declarations.

3. Minutes of the meetings held 9 September 2013

The minutes of the meetings held on 9 September 2013 were approved as an accurate record.

4. Call In of any Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Key Officer Decisions

There were no requests for Call-in to consider.

5. The Vision for Education in Peterborough

The report was introduced by the Assistant Director for Education and Resources and provided the Committee with an update on the development of the School to School Support Partnerships. Members were informed that a significant amount of work had been achieved with schools and SLE Associates and this is seen as an invaluable way of improving schools outcomes through schools working together. John Harris from SLE Associates advised Members that work had now been undertaken to put a proposal together which had been shared with schools. Members were asked to refer to Appendix 2 of the report 'System on a Page - Peterborough Schools Self Improving Network' which outlined the proposed school to school support system. This had been presented to all Head Teachers and Governors at the beginning of October. The key proposal and thinking behind school to school support was that schools in Peterborough become self-improving schools and as a result of this

Peterborough becomes an attractive place for people in the community to learn and for people who work in schools.

Key components to the network:

- Head teachers challenge each other about their schools performance through a formal process of peer challenge.
- Schools would work in groups of approximately nine schools.
- Support available to schools is widely developed and more flexible.
- Overseen by School Improvement Board which sets overall direction of the school improvement strategy. The Board would be accountable to Scrutiny, the Director of Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University.

The next stage would be to pilot some of the work with a Primary School and Secondary School starting in January the results of which would be brought back to the committee.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members supported the proposal but were concerned at how the change from the proposal into working practice would work and how the school grouping would be achieved to ensure a good mix of schools were in place in each group. Members were concerned about the weighting of the school groups. *Members were advised that the major element was the core quality peer challenge process and the rigour of that process. The next stage of work was to develop in detail how the peer challenge would work to ensure people providing the challenge were working to a common set of arrangements. Training and development would be provided supported by high quality data. The Head teachers would work in groups of three to ensure a spread of expertise.*
- Members wanted to know why there would only be three Head Teachers in a group. *Members were advised that the Head Teacher Task and Finish group working on the proposal had assessed this and felt that three was the right number. The Triad System was typically used in Peer Challenge systems and there was good evidence to show that it was an appropriate process.*
- Members also wanted to know about the process of encouraging collaboration instead of forcing collaboration. *Members were informed that collaboratives were focused on a system of school review and support not on all purpose arrangements for collaborating on every part of work that schools do together. Collaboration worked best when focused on two key things. 1. Improving quality of teaching and learning and 2. On leadership and management. There was no firm view on the construction of the collaborative or about how to go about that process. Design suggests schools in a collaborative process should be drawn from a range of areas in the city. The pilot in January would be a chance for people to test the process and see it working and to give people the confidence to put it into practice. This would then encourage participation.*
- Members sought an opinion on the role of governors and they referred to page 12, paragraph 5.2 and 5.3 of the report regarding three consultation events for headteachers, school leaders and governors and the outcome of the results on page 26. What was being done to get the governing bodies on board? *Members were informed that the consultation papers were sent out in October to all schools and governing bodies for them to respond. The table on page 26 showed the results from the responses. Officers noted that there would need to be continuing discussion with governors as the process evolved as governors had a critical role to play. It was possible that governors could be built into the peer challenge process.*
- Member commented that the time scale for the consultation had not allowed for the governing bodies to have the consultation as a formal agenda item at one of their meetings. The Assistant Director Education and Resources *informed Members that schools had been well briefed.*
- Members commented on the composition of the Peterborough School Improvement Board being set up and noted that there was reference to only one Councillor being a member

and that was the Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and University. Members suggested that given the importance of the subject that an additional councillor should be on the Board and suggested a Member from the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee. *The Assistant Director Education and Resources noted the suggestion and advised that he would feed it back to the Board for consideration.*

- Members referred to the table of consultation responses on page 26 and noted that there appeared to be over whelming support for proposal. There was however an exception in the column marked LA showing a low response number of 7 with 2 not supporting the proposals and 3 uncertain. Who were these people and what was the nature of their concern? *Members were informed that those people were members of the Local Authority school improvement function and that their roles would evolve with this model which would be different going forward.*
- Members were concerned that there appeared to be too much parallel work happening at the same time and were concerned that the priority was more about timeframe than the right decision. *Members were assured that this was not the case and there was a structured approach being taken.*
- A Member of the Youth Council referred to the statement in the report which referred to “the local authority allocating from the DSG a recurrent commissioning and development fund of £450K for a period of three years” and wanted some examples of where the money would be spent. *The Assistant Director Education and Resources advised that the money that had been put aside was money that had been previously held back from the local authority to fund school improvement activity. The money would be used to target and support individual programmes to drive improvement. Schools would need to demonstrate how it was being used and the School Improvement Board would monitor to make sure that the money was being used effectively.*
- Was the £450K provided over three years or was it £450K per year. *Members were advised that the Schools Forum had agreed that it was £450K per year.*
- Members of the Youth Council were concerned that the pilot of the secondary school collaborative in spring 2014 would provide a reaction from other schools and affect exam results. *Members were advised that the pilot would be testing the model, it would not affect teaching and learning for the 2014 exams series. This year was about putting the framework in place.*

The Chair thanked the Assistant Director Education and Resources for an informative report and for the work completed so far on the development of the School to School Partnership.

ACTIONS AGREED

1. The Committee noted the report and endorsed the proposals for the School to School Partnership.
2. The Committee requested that the Assistant Director Education and Resources provide the following:
 - a. A briefing note to update the Committee in January 2014 on any further developments that have taken place since this report.
 - b. A further full report on the development of the programme and progress of the pilot to the Committee in March 2014.
3. The Assistant Director Education and Resources to ensure that governors are also included as part of the peer challenge process and that this is tested in the pilot stage.
4. The Assistant Director Education and Resources to request on behalf of the Committee that the School Improvement Board have an additional councillor on the Board and that it is a Member from the Creating Opportunities and Tackling Inequalities Scrutiny Committee.

6. Presentation of 2013 Unvalidated Examination Results

The report provided the Committee with a summary of the 2013 unvalidated assessment and examination results for both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. The results were provisional and Members were advised that they were liable to change as they did not take into account any re-marks or any allowances for pupils who were new to the UK and had been present for less than 2 years.

Key Highlights were:

Key Stage 2

- The way Primary School Key Stage 2 tests were assessed had been changed. There was still a focus on Level 4 but English had been split into two different measures: reading and writing and a child would need to pass both measures to achieve the bench mark.
- The gap in reading and writing to the national average was still significant but this should narrow when the results have been validated and had improved over the last three years.
- Additional support was being provided to schools where needed to help narrow the gap with the national average.
- Key Stage 2 results should show a further increase in positive results when the validated data arrives.

Key Stage 4

- The gap to average had been closed by 6% this year and there had been a significant improvement from secondary schools.
- Results for 5 A* to C remains above national average.
- Pupil Premium performance had shown a 10% increase this year.
- 15% increase in GCSE results over the last 5 years.
- The authority is the 5th most improved authority since 2008 in terms of 5 A* to C GCSE's (excluding English and Maths).
- No secondary schools below floor standards.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members congratulated the officers on a positive set of results.
- Members sought assurance that the positive progress that had been made would continue under the proposed new school improvement process. *Members were informed that a lot of the improvement work was driven by the analysis of data and this would still be the key driver going forward. Some of the interventions already in place would remain as they had proved to be outstanding. The school improvement strategy going forward would incorporate the improvement work done so far.*
- Members sought clarification that under the changing landscape improvement in KS4 results would continue. *Members were informed that nationally at Key Stage 4 - 5 A* to C including Maths and English fell by 2% this year and the expectation was that it would fall again in the next two years. Next year would be due to the Government changes regarding early entry to exams which meant that a child could only be counted on their first exam entry whereas previously all entries prior to the summer exams had been counted. In 2015 there would also be a change in the measure of how a schools performance was measured. 5 A*-C including Maths and English will disappear and there will be a measure around the best eight subjects at GCSE. The expectation was that there would be a significant drop in exam results in September nationally.*
- Members referred to the table on page 33 of the report, item 5.24 regarding KS4 floor standards over the past four years. How would the Committee know which schools had yo-yoed below or above the floor standard over the four years shown? *Members were informed that the information was available and would be provided after the meeting.*

- Members wanted to know if there was evidence that schools had applied the Pupil Premium in a positive way and if it had made a contribution to the improvements made. *The Assistant Director Education and Resources confirmed that there had been a positive impact through the use of Pupil Premium and this was evidenced in the uplift in results. Every school had to show where they were spending their Pupil Premium on their school websites so it was evident how it was being used. It was also monitored at national level.*
- Did Governing Bodies have a good understanding of Pupil Premium? *Members were advised that Pupil Premium was now a significant part of Ofsted Inspections and therefore Governors had become much more aware of its significance and how it was being used.*
- Members referred to page 37 of the report, Key Stage 4 Results and commented that they were very impressive. Were the results evenly spread throughout all of the secondary schools or was there a disparity between schools. *Members were advised that when the validated results were presented at the meeting in March school level results would be shown. It was fair to say that some schools had improved significantly and some less significantly but the final results would be shown when the validated results were released. The average performance between Maintained Schools and Academies were the same.*
- A Member of the Youth Council referred to page 32 of the report, section 5.15 Key Stage 4 League Tables. He was concerned about how many subjects would be cut following the Wolf Report. Could this change have a significant impact on the LA average against the National Average? *Members were advised that the outcomes of the Wolf Report and the change in GCSE's would affect everyone nationally. The main concern going forward would be the change in performance measures to the best eight subjects in GCSE's and which subjects this would include.*
- Members sought clarification that the LA would be challenging schools on the way they spend their pupil premium to ensure it was spent in the cohort it was specifically allocated to. *Members were informed that Pupil Premium was a separate grant and schools were fully accountable for it. The Statute states that the Head Teacher is responsible for the accountability and spending of the Pupil Premium money. Schools have to demonstrate that there is a tangible impact on the child's outcome through use of the Pupil Premium. The Head Teacher would be challenged if there was no improvement in the outcomes of the relevant cohort receiving it.*

The Chair thanked Alistair Kingsley and Councillor Shearman for the work that they had done with Gary Perkins to analyse the examination results data. The Chair also thanked Gary Perkins for his clear presentation of the data and willingness to work with the Committee.

The Chair also thanked the Assistant Director Education and Resources for all the hard work he had put into the development of the School to School Partnership and congratulated him on his new position as Head of Corporate Property and Children's Services.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the report and requested that further detailed information be provided when available on the schools within the Floor Standard data for both Primary and Key Stage 4.

7. Tackling Poverty Strategy and Action Plan

The report was introduced by the Community Cohesion Manager and provided the Committee with a final draft of the Tackling Poverty Strategy and Action Plan. The strategy provided a structure and common accountability to the work being done to tackle poverty. The following had been added to the strategy since last being presented to the Committee:

- Measures had been developed to help evaluate the progress being made in tackling poverty.
- A large amount of data has been added.
- An action plan to show how the strategy will be taken forward.

- A governance structure to oversee the work.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members referred to page 53 of the report, Priority 4: *“A city of people living healthy and resilient lives in decent homes”*. There was no mention of the environment in which people live and having access to green space. Could this be incorporated? *Officers noted the comment and agreed to incorporate the ‘green space’ factor in the strategy.*
- Members wished to pass on thanks to Adrian Chapman for an excellent and comprehensive piece of work he had done on the Poverty Strategy.
- What is the timescale for the action plans? *Members were advised that there would be a detailed action plan for each of the key delivery projects but timescales had not been confirmed yet.*
- Members requested that a detailed structure plan be included in the Poverty Strategy and to show how the scrutiny committees would fit into this.
- A Member of the Youth Council referred to page 55, Priority 5: *“A city where children enjoy their childhood and express their skills and potential in life”* and was concerned that work experience had not been included as part of this priority. *Members were referred to page 82, Priority 5, “Children are enjoying their childhood and expressing their skills and potential in life” and Priority 6, “Our city is a place where business succeeds and communities thrive”. Although work experience was not mentioned there were projects within these priorities that would support work experience. Officers noted however that this element could be strengthened.*
- Members referred again to Priority 5 in the strategy and referred specifically to the statement *“To give our children the best chance for success and reaching their potential we will invest in the early years so that children make the best start in life”*. Members wanted to know if this referred to all children in all wards across the city and if there would be an impact on the strategy following the recent announcement regarding the change of status in the Children’s Centres. *Members were informed that it did refer to all children in all wards across the city. With regard to the Children’s Centres the strategy would be amended accordingly to incorporate the outcome of the decision with regard to the children’s centres once that was known.*
- Members commented on the improvement in employment figures for Peterborough and wanted to know what percentage of the improvement might be attributed to people in part time work and were still having to claim benefits. *Officers did not have the information at the meeting but would report back to the committee.*
- Members referred to page 58, item 3, Living Wage and wanted to know what percentage of people were earning less than the Living Wage. *Officers did not have the information at the meeting but would report back to the committee.*
- Members wanted to know if the true situation with regard to Poverty in the city was being masked by saying that the number of people working in the city had improved. *Members were advised that the figures provided were from National Statistics and a further piece of work would need to be done to drill down underneath these. The Community Cohesion Manager commented that there were also a percentage of people on zero hour contracts which meant that they would still need support.*
- A Member of the Youth Council referred to Priority 4, *“A city of People living healthy and resilient lives in decent homes”* and that it mentioned that work was being done with young people to identify volunteer Community Health Champions. There was however no mention of working with young people in the action plan. What was the age range of young people who were being worked with and could working with young people be clearly identified in the action plan. *Members were referred to page 81, project 4 and the roll out of the Community Health Champion’s Programme which referred to the work done with young people. The officer noted that the words Young People had not been mentioned and could be incorporated. The age range would be approximately late teens to early twenties but this could be clarified.*

- A Member of the Youth Council requested that young people be taught in schools how to handle their finances.

The Chair congratulated officers on the Strategy and acknowledged the amount of work that had gone in to producing it.

RECOMMENDATION

The Committee endorsed the Tackling Poverty Strategy and Action Plan and recommended it to Cabinet for approval.

ACTIONS AGREED

1. The Committee noted the report and requested that the Community Cohesion Manager incorporate the following into the strategy:
 - a. Incorporate the 'green space' factor in the strategy.
 - b. Include a detailed structure plan in the Strategy and to show how the scrutiny committees would fit into this.
 - c. Include work experience and apprenticeships under the projects to deliver priorities 5 and 6.
 - d. Include the wording 'young people' in the action plan under project 4 relating to the community health champion's programme.
2. The Performance and Information Manager to provide information on:
 - a. percentage of people were earning less than the Living Wage
 - b. percentage of people in part time work
3. The Committee requested that an update on the progress of the Poverty Action Plan be brought back to the Committee at a further meeting.

8. Children's Services Improvement Programme

The Executive Director of Children's Services introduced the report. The report informed the Committee on progress that had been made on the Children's Services Improvement Programme which had been put in place following an Ofsted Inspection in August 2011. The progress report had been a regular report to the committee and the last update to the committee had been in September 2013. The key highlights of the report were:

- Decrease in number of referrals in September
- Re-referrals dropped down to 23.3%
- Decrease in number of initial assessments completed down to 151
- Increase in number of initial assessments completed in timescale to 88.1%
- Decrease in CAFs – although within target
- Decrease in Child Protection Plans to 189
- There had been some staffing problems as some staff were leaving due to more attractive pay rates in some failing authorities. A refreshed advertising campaign had been launched to attract new staff.
- Early Intervention and Prevention – Cherry Lodge and the Manor had recently received an Ofsted Inspection and both units had received a 'good'.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- Members requested an update on Looked After Children visits. *The Director of Children's Services did not have the information at the meeting but agreed to send this out separately.*

- Members noted a large decrease in the number of referrals for September and sought clarification on why and assurance that the decrease was an unusual month. *Members were advised that this had been looked into and dip samples of some contacts and referrals were taken to see if all the contacts were meeting the threshold criteria for referral and then initial assessments. The contacts sampled were consistent with the threshold criteria. It was unclear why there had been such a decrease in that month.*
- Members referred to the Troubled Families Project and sought assurance that mechanisms had been put in place to ensure that those families that had been “turned around” did not slip back. *Members were advised that there was a fast track process in place. This was provided for families that had been on the programme and was in place in case they did need further support in some way. Families could be fast tracked back into the programme to ensure improvement could be sustained in their lives.*

The Chair thanked the Executive Director of Children’s Services for a positive report but voiced concern on the staffing issues and hoped that the recruitment campaign would be successful.

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee noted the report and requested that the Executive Director of Children’s Services provide an update on Looked After Children visits.

9. Scrutiny in a Day: Understanding and Managing the Impacts of Welfare Reform on Communities in Peterborough

The Senior Governance Officer introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the progress being made towards organising the Scrutiny in a Day event on 17 January 2014 which would focus on the impacts of Welfare Reform.

The following comments and suggestions were made:

- Members commented that the time available in the morning for information gathering may not be enough to take in all the information.
- A member of the Working Party advised that Members would be able to focus on strands of interest relevant to their own committees.
- Members commented that it might be difficult for some people to attend the event in the day time.
- Councillor Sandford commented that it was an important subject and a high level of scrutiny should be applied and felt that the whole day should be held in public.
- Members commented that the morning session was in effect the equivalent of the pre meeting of a normal committee meeting. This allowed Members the opportunity to study the reports, go through the evidence and identify key lines of enquiry.
- Members wanted to know if other councillors who were not Members of the Scrutiny Committees could also attend the event. *The Senior Governance Officer advised that other councillors could attend to observe the Joint Scrutiny Committee and ask questions in the same way they would be allowed to at an ordinary scrutiny meeting.*

ACTIONS AGREED

The Committee agreed that the Senior Governance Officer take the comments made by the Committee back to the Member Working Party for consideration.

10. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Committee received the latest version of the Council’s Forward Plan of Key Decisions, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual

Cabinet Members would make during the course of the following four months. Members were invited to comment on the Forward Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Committee's work programme.

ACTION AGREED

The Committee noted the Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

11. Work Programme

Members considered the Committee's Work Programme for 2013/14 and discussed possible items for inclusion.

ACTION AGREED

To confirm the work programme for 2013/14 and the Senior Governance Officer to include any additional items as requested during the meeting including:

- Domestic Violence Strategy
- Early Years Children's Centres
- Poverty Action Plan Update

12. Date of Next Meeting

Monday 6 January 2013

The meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 9.34pm

CHAIRMAN

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