

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
MEETING
HELD AT 7PM ON THURSDAY 12 JULY 2018
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

Committee Members Present: Councillors D Over (Vice-Chairman) S Bashir, G Casey, A Dowson, A Ellis, M Farooq, S Lane, M Mahabadi, B Rush, B Saltmarsh, J Stokes (substitute for Cllr Goodwin)
Co-opted Members: P Cantley, J O' Connor, R Rahemtulla, Parish Councillors S Lucas and J Bhatti

Also Present: Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Children's Services

Officers Present: Lou Williams – Service Director for Children's Services and Safeguarding
Nicola Curley – Assistant Director of Children's Social Care
Gary Perkins: Assistant Director of Education
Jonathan Lewis – Service Director, Education
Brian Howard - Head of Schools Infrastructure
Karen Dunleavy – Democratic Services Officer
David Beauchamp – Democratic Services Officer

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Goodwin (Chairman), Councillor Stokes was in attendance as substitute, Alistair Kingsley (Independent Co-opted Member) and Flavio Vettese, (Roman Catholic Education Co-opted Member).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS

There were no declarations of Interest or whipping declarations.

3. MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2018.

The minutes of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 15 March 2018 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

4. CALL IN OF ANY CABINET, CABINET MEMBER OR KEY OFFICER DECISIONS

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

5. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which recommended that the Alistair Kingsley, Rizwan Rahemtulla and Susie be appointed non-voting co-opted members. The report also recommended that Junaid Bhatti be appointed as either a non-voting co-opted member to represent the rural area or as a nominated substitute for Susie Lucas should she be appointed. All appointments were to be reviewed at the beginning of the next municipal year.

- Councillor Ellis proposed that both of the Parish Council nominees be appointed co-opted members
- Members raised the point that Junaid Bhatti represented an urban parish area and queried whether it was appropriate for him to be appointed as a co-opted member as a result.
- Members raised the possibility of the one parish co-opted member appointing a substitute themselves if unable to attend.
- It was clarified that the nominations were put forward by the Parish Council Liaison Committee. Members suggested that any queries regarding the nominees should be redirected back to Parish Council Liaison.
- Members suggested that as long as one rural parish councillor was appointed, there would be no difficulties in appointing a second parish councillor from an urban area.
- A general point was made that if someone is willing to contribute to the committee, then they should be able to do so.

There was unanimous agreement that all four nominees should be appointed co-opted members.

Three of the four nominated persons were in attendance and Rizwan Rahemtulla, Susie Lucas and Junaid Bhatti were invited to join the committee for the remainder of the meeting.

ACTIONS AGREED:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to

1. Appoint Alistair Kingsley to the Committee as an Independent Co-opted Member with no voting rights for the municipal year 2018/2019. Appointment to be reviewed annually at the beginning of the next municipal year.
2. Appoint Rizwan Rahemtulla as a non-voting Co-opted Member to represent the Muslim Community for the municipal year 2018/2019. Appointment to be reviewed annually at the beginning of the next municipal year.
3. Appoint Parish Councillor Susie Lucas as a non-voting Co-opted Member to represent the rural area for the municipal year 2018/2019. Appointment to be reviewed annually at the beginning of the next municipal year.
4. Appoint Parish Councillor Junaid Bhatti as a second non-voting Co-opted Member to represent the rural area for the municipal year 2018/2019. Appointment to be reviewed annually at the beginning of the next municipal year. -

6. REPORT ON WORK OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE

The report was introduced by the Service Director for Children's Services and Safeguarding which advised the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee of activity carried out by the Corporate Parenting Committee since July 2017.

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

- The Council were not fully staffed in terms of social workers. There were a small number of vacancies and around 12% of roles were undertaken by locum agency cover staff. This compared favourably with most of the Eastern region.
- It was noted that recruiting social workers was difficult.
- The Council had introduced the concept of the 'Children's Practitioner' some years ago. They supported the work of qualified social workers but did not have to be qualified social workers and this had helped significantly with workforce pressures
- Percentage vacancy rates were not included in the report and officers did not have the exact figures available at the time of the meeting. Officers estimated it was around 17% although many of these posts were covered by locum staff. The number of completely empty posts was relatively small. Officers were happy to provide written clarification to members if requested.
- The Cabinet Member for Children's Services stated that all Councillors had a corporate parenting responsibility and stated that there would be a focus in the 12 months to follow this meeting on apprenticeships and providing 'bite-sized chunks' to children and care leavers including work experience, help with CVs and interview techniques. The Cabinet Member invited members to provide her with information about people, businesses and schools that may wish to support this. It was highlighted members could get involved even if they do not sit on the Corporate Parenting Committee.
- Every care leaver had a personal advisor to work closely with them. They received priority for housing and accommodation. Most of those children were not ready to enter independent living so had a supported living arrangement.
- There were no areas of the city in which care leavers were particularly concentrated.
- Care leavers for whom the council has a responsibility had a personal champion to take up issues and to challenge and criticise where necessary and to maintain a close link with the Head of Housing Needs, to ensure there was enough provision when young people moved into independent living.
- Members expressed their thanks to the team for their hard work and for setting the groundwork for an improved year.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to

1. Note that the report is an accurate reflection of the work of the Corporate Parenting Committee over the last 6 months
2. Agree that the Corporate Parenting Committee reports to Scrutiny on an annual basis going forward, as with the other Committees

7. SCHOOL ATTENDANCE 2017

The report was introduced by the Assistant Director of Education which informed members of the Committee regarding rates of absence at Peterborough schools in 2016/17.

The Assistant Director of Education stated that the report was already nearly a year out of date despite this meeting being the first opportunity to discuss it. This was due to the release of data and meeting schedules. Releases of information regarding outcomes for attendance at school took place in March of each year for the previous school year. Consequently, the report examined attendance and absence rates in schools for the 2016/17 school year as the end of the 2017/18 school year approaches.

Members' attention was drawn to the significant restructuring of the Education Services, specifically School Improvement and Special Educational Needs during the previous school year. However, the team had continued to provide a high quality service and had extended their work by offering service-level agreements to schools for the first time. The team would now look forward to a significant increase in the number of service-level agreements with schools for the next school year.

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

- The same services were offered to both academies and maintained schools and the same charges applied to both.
- Some academies chose to employ their own attendance lead officers rather than continuing to use those from the local authority. A number of schools that had not been engaging with the local authority staff were starting to do so again and many of these were the first to engage in service level agreements.
- Engagement with academies was growing and it was hoped that when a similar report was produced a year from now, this would have grown further.
- Those schools with whom the Council had limited contact were also those that provided limited data. This made it hard to extract the data for an individual school to know whether there were genuine issues that the Council could support them with.
- Unlike the freely provided attainment data, officers could not force schools to release attendance data and the Department for Education did not produce data at individual school level, only at a local authority level. Officers hoped that attendance data would be more freely available in the future.
- Officers stated that they endeavoured to build the relationship with schools to make them feel comfortable in releasing their data and the vast majority of schools in Peterborough provided direct access to it.
- Schools which needed the most assistance were evenly spread across both academies and maintained schools.
- Members noted that special schools had a higher rate of overall absence and asked for an explanation of this and what could be done. Officers responded that special schools had lower overall pupil numbers than other schools so each child represented a larger percentage of the total. Additionally when children had additional medical needs their absences were often longer than for children at mainstream schools. There were a number of such children in 2016/17 who underwent lengthy illness absences as well as medical absences.
- Members stated that work to improve children's attendance at special schools should be prioritised because of their extra need and the importance of improving their educational outcomes. Officers agreed and stated that they provided the same level of support to special schools as they do to mainstream schools. Officers showed understanding where children's absences were related to medical issues and special education needs. Support was provided to the families as well as the schools.
- Members asked officers to define inclusion as mentioned in section 2.2, D: Special Needs and Inclusion. Officers responded that this was the element of the Special Educational Needs and Improvement Service which is interested in and working towards equal opportunities for all
- Members referred to sections 4.16 to 4.18 and asked if any proposed projects or bids to address issues around secondary school attendances had gone through to the Sub-Regional Improvement Board or any other organisations. Officers responded that there had not been any but that this would be considered for future bids.
- The threshold at which children were deemed to be persistently absent changed from 15% to 10% at the start of the 2015/16 school year, hence why rates of persistent absence in the report appear to have gone up in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

- Members praised officers for the success of the work done to improve school attendance and suggested that this was the first step to improving exam results. Officers responded that they were proud of the improvement but were not complacent and that they would never be satisfied.
- It was noted that school attendance in Peterborough was still not better than the national average but that there was no reason why this should not be possible in the future. Peterborough compared positively with its statistical neighbours but the goal was to be better than the national average.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to

1. Acknowledge the outcomes stated in the report and offer their support to relevant officers in pursuing actions to promote continued improvement in attendance at school.

8. NATIONAL OFFER DAY – PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOL ALLOCATIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2018

The Head of School Infrastructure introduced the report which was a status report of the allocations of school places into Primary Reception Year and Secondary School Year 7 for September 2018. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee debated the report and in summary, key points raised and responses to questions included:

- Officers were aware of the development of Barnack that would put pressure on places at Barnack CE Primary School but the school would be unable to expand further. The properties were close to the school so residents who lived there would get a greater priority than those on the perimeter of the catchment area. There were children from Helpston who attended Barnack Primary School who would be pushed back to attend John Clare school in Helpston. Officers were carrying out a study about expanding John Clare to help address the situation.
- It was suggested that Parish Councils had some concern about the above situation and it was agreed that they should be given a presentation from the Head of Schools Infrastructure.
- More directions from the Council to secondary schools to admit children were made for September 2018 than there had been for some time. 5% of children did not get one of their first three preferences and had directions made for them.
- There was considerable data behind this report so providing members with information about preferences and vacancies for both primary and secondary schools by catchment or planning area was possible. It was agreed that a briefing note would be circulated. It was stated that if Members were not satisfied with a briefing note or had further queries, this could be revisited at a future meeting.
- Information about levels of council-funded transport of pupils to schools would have to be circulated to members separately once journeys were allocated over the 2018 Summer holidays in readiness for September. It was agreed that a briefing note would be provided by the Head of Schools Infrastructure. Officers suggested that the increase in the number of directions made by the Council to schools to admit pupils could mean that levels of council-funded transport would increase.
- Comparative figures between Peterborough and its statistical neighbours about the number of children failing to gain their preferences were not available at the meeting although these could be obtained. It was agreed that the Head of Schools Infrastructure would circulate this information to members of the Committee via a briefing note.

- The increase in applications for school places was due to the growth in population in the city, hence the need for the expansion of schools. Many factors influenced parental choice.
- 80.6% of children were admitted to their first preference school, lower than in 2015/16 when it was approximately 85/86%.
- It was agreed that a briefing note be circulated to members providing a comparison of the rates of children obtaining places at their first preference primary and secondary schools between Peterborough and its statistical neighbours.
- Pressures on secondary school places would become significant from 2019 onwards with 226 extra children on roll. Forecasting and capacity returns to the Department for Education were being completed at the time of this meeting which would provide an up-to-date picture using the data from these allocations for these transition rounds to know exactly what the position was.
- Expansions had been put in place at Ormiston, Nene Park and Jack Hunt Schools and officers were examining the possibility of expanding Ken Stimpson School.
- The Paston Reserve Free School was important and the 18 month delays related to the government's free school programme and the announcement of funding. The School was key in order to provide the capacity and buffer needed in the city and for future development. Wave 13 of the free school programme had opened up six weeks prior to this meeting. Bids were due by academy trusts into the government's free school programme by November 2018. Should this be successful as a bid and capital funding obtained as with Hampton Gardens this would give the council the opportunity to open the school in 2021.
- On National Offer Day there were 237 offers for 240 places in the three primary schools in Hampton. By the 18 June those remaining three places were taken regardless of declines and new and late applications. The current sites could not be expanded. The Hampton Lakes Primary School would open with one form of entry in September 2019 in Hampton College Primary School. The delays in the Carillion project for Hampton Lakes has delayed the opening by one year but it was agreed with the Education and Skills Funding Agency that the school could open with one form of entry in Hampton College Primary School and as two forms of entry in the new school building in 2020.
- An analysis was being completed for the whole of Hampton East as there was due to be a second primary school on that estate. This would probably be needed due to the current housing growth and the typical yield expected by 2022. This would probably be a three form entry school. One challenge would be to enable 'in-year' children to move into the new schools rather than just taking from reception year upwards. The housing growth planned was so significant that if the typical yield was generated in the next 3-4 years there would be a considerable number of children on the estates who required in-year entry.
- Members asked if lessons from the expansion of Hampton School were being learnt in advance of the Great Haddon development. Officers stated that these lessons needed to be learnt for Hampton East also and stressed the importance of having places to cover 'in-year' growth and remodelling demography, assumptions and yield for Hampton to be applied to Great Haddon. This was based on recent developments in Cambridgeshire and a survey of residents in Cardea and Hampton with regard to the yield of pupils to see whether yield assumptions needed to be changed.
- Members suggested that the ability to provide school places may have been constrained because of the cost of converting maintained schools to academies. It was suggested that money had been taken away from local authorities and given to academies; restricting the councils' ability to provide extra places. Officers stated that they were now in the process of charging academies for conversion work. There was a deficit between the cost and how much the Department for Education was funding the council.
- The other issue was the ability of academies to restrict growth in their schools. The council had an excellent relationship with all academies in the area and working with them on school places was not a problem.

- Officers stated that all local authorities wanted additional funding for academy conversion and this was a national issue although the rate of academy conversion was slowing down in Peterborough.
- There were two main options for opening a new school
 - A free school bid could be made by anyone with the appropriate educational credentials to set up a school. Wave 13 was focussed on areas of basic need although it could also be where educational standards were too low. This was an open process run directly by the government with the decision made the the Minister.
 - A free school presumption in which the local authority would run a competition locally and select an appropriate sponsor or an academy trust, then make recommendation to the Regional Schools Commissioner who would make a yes or no decision on that choice.
- The benefit of the free school bid over a free school presumption was that the start-up costs would be funded by the Department for Education.
- Both options would create an academy school. Free schools were very similar to academies but had minor differences in terms and conditions and arrangements. They had the same freedoms from the National Curriculum, national Terms and conditions and other factors.
- The council could not open a local authority maintained school unless a free school presumption process had been undertaken twice with no bids received.
- The Government had announced that new voluntarily aided maintained schools could be opened with the diocese paying around 10% of the cost. The details were not yet available and there was not yet a clear route for opening more maintained schools.
- Members asked if there was a 'plan B' should the free school bid be unsuccessful given the future need for more secondary school provision. Officers responded that some agreements were in place for some years for 'bulge years' although this was only for the short term. The benefit of the free school route was that it came with capital funding. The council owned the land at Paston and an alternative option would be for the council to fund the building of a school there itself.
- If an academy or free school was underperforming, the local authority would be responsible for the outcome of the children in that school under the Education Act 1996. The council would have no powers of intervention with regard to school improvement.
- In the event of an academy or free school underperforming, officers could challenge the school and officers were already in regular contact with them. Officers could also speak to the multi-academy trusts, the CEOs of those trusts with whom the council has a strong relationship, the Regional Schools Commissioner or directly to ministers as a last resort. The council could have some influence over academies although not directly and it was hoped that this could be achieved through the strength of the council's relationship with them and not through formal action.
- Members commented that data was necessary to decide whether intervention was necessary and asked if academies were as forthcoming with this as local authority maintained schools. Officers responded that very provisional data for Key Stage 2 had been released during the week of the meeting and that all academies had provided their data.
- Councils must justify why they needed the data but there was a data sharing agreement and secondary schools would send data on the Wednesday prior to the release of the information on Thursday. This was a partnership and both parties were accountable. Schools had never said no to sharing data after being asked.
- Members stated their concerns about the rural areas, particularly Barnack and Helpston. There were three main issues:
 - People in Barnack could not understand why there would be no additional school expansion there.
 - Helpston residents were concerned over its continued growth and the loss of its character

- Residents of smaller villages such as Southorpe, Bainton and Ufford who had traditionally gone to one school may have to go to another school that was not as convenient.
- Members requested that contact should take place with the villages, e.g. through Parish Councils, school meetings, public meetings etc. to ensure that everybody was aware of what was happening.
- Members stated that there were several new schools and extensions and requested a briefing note on the source of the funding, how much funding had been given to the various developments and what were the local authorities liabilities. Concerns were expressed about the council having responsibilities with little or no the control. A briefing note would be circulated from the Head of Schools Infrastructure to members and the issue could be brought back to the committee if needed.

AGREED ACTIONS:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to

1. Note the status of allocations of schools places for September 2018 into Primary Reception Year and Secondary School Year 7. - all agreed
2. It was also agreed that the Head of Schools Infrastructure would provide briefing notes to members on the following topics:
 - Information about how the number of children failing to gain one of their top preferences varies between different catchment and planning areas. To also include a comparison of travel distances to school between different catchment and planning areas and an identification of areas of concern.
 - A comparison of the rates of children obtaining places at their first preference primary and secondary schools between Peterborough and its statistical neighbours.
 - The sources of funding for school capital projects.
 - Whether school transport provided to other schools would increase or decrease. This information to be confirmed in September 2018 as journeys were allocated over the summer holidays.
3. The Head of Schools Infrastructure agreed to provide a presentation to Parish Councils about the expansion of Barnack and its effects on the rural area.

9. EDUCATION STRATEGY UPDATE PRESENTATION

The Service Director for Education delivered a presentation on the current progress of the Education Strategy. The PowerPoint presentation is attached at Appendix 1 of these minutes.

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

- Members congratulated officers on the quality of the presentation and its focus on data and objectivity.
- With respect to Teach Peterborough, Members stated that trainees and recent graduates needed to be engaged with for a full spectrum of views, not just Head Teachers. Officers responded that they were looking to set up a reference group of teachers in autumn 2018 although not necessarily newly qualified ones. This would help to identify issues regarding teacher retention, e.g. too much marking and the challenges of the curriculum they were having to deliver. Officers advised that they had met with recent graduates for their feedback
- With regard to the University, Members asked if the Council were engaging with businesses, schools, students and teachers to understand what the curriculum could and

should be in the area. Officers responded that this was taking place and that the Combined Authority were involved. After the decision was made to move onto the Embankment the next stage was to examine exactly where the curriculum could and should be and what the University's unique selling point would be and the process for this was already underway. The Combined Authority who were providing the funding were enthusiastic. The Higher Education steering group was also proceeding quickly.

- Officers stated that they would be focussing on improving league table positions.
- Members mentioned generational differences in how people viewed their careers, with young people less likely to pursue one career for their entire lives and more likely to take years out for travelling etc. Members asked if any research had been done in this area. Officers responded that this had not yet been done but this was one of the areas that needed to be looked at carefully.
- Officers stated that in order to improve retention of our best teachers, a number of options were being considering including whether to offer teachers a sabbatical or career break. The Government had put together a programme to allow this happen. Officers stated there was the potential to offer something more comprehensive than the government programme or one that took place earlier in a teacher's career.
- The biggest challenge was retaining teachers and this was a different issue to recruitment. Recruitment rates had remained steady but the challenge was the number that were being lost. Many options were being considered and this was one of the areas that would be considered as part of the Education Strategy and Action Plan. Lateral thinking was required to keep teachers in the profession. .
- Teaching is a highly dynamic profession and teachers must continuously develop their knowledge and skills to adapt. It was important to encourage this attitude among teachers as they must prepare their pupil's for a working life that extended far into the future and may be very different to the working world today.
- With regard to how to keep people engaged, officers stated that one of their teaching schools had been successful in receiving funding to retrain teachers in different subject areas. Teachers could retrain in subjects where there was a shortage, e.g. a P.E. teacher could retrain in Maths to deal with the core subjects and provide a new impetus in their teaching career.
- Members stated that recent graduates had commented that some new teachers were under the impression that teaching was 'easy money' and that they would have plenty to do in their spare time. In reality, teachers could almost be earning less than minimum wage when their working hours were taken into account. The importance of making teaching worthwhile and keeping teachers interested was highlighted. Passion cannot be relied upon exclusively although this was important. Members stated that the council should see what the city could do to engage those people and look at other benefits. Members stated that this should be a fundamental part of the council's strategy and stated that it seemed like it was.

AGREED ACTIONS

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note and comment on the current progress of the delivery of the Education Strategy.

10. REVIEW OF 2017/18 AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2018/19

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report which invited the Committee to approve its draft work programme for the 2018/19 municipal years, consider its work in the previous year, monitor previous recommendations and note the terms of reference for the Committee.

AGREED ACTIONS:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and

1. Considered items presented to the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee during 2017/18 and made recommendations on the future monitoring of these items where necessary.
2. Determined its priorities, and approved the draft work programme for 2018/2019 attached at Appendix 1.
3. Noted the Recommendations Monitoring Report attached at Appendix 2 and considered if further monitoring of the recommendations made during the 2017/2018 municipal year was required.
4. Noted the Terms of Reference for this Committee as set out in Part 3, Section 4, Overview and Scrutiny Functions and in particular paragraph 2.1 item 1 Children and Education Scrutiny Committee as attached at Appendix 3.

11. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report. The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of 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 discussed item 21: Healthy Schools on the Forward Plan and it was discussed whether this would fall under the remit of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee as well as the Health Scrutiny Committee. The possibilities of having a briefing note or a joint item were discussed. Members stated that the issue could be talked about for some length, it deserved its own item and that a briefing note would be doing the issue a disservice because of the strong influence health and wellbeing has on school output. It was noted that public health and schools have had a very different relationship over the last 20-30 years. Members highlighted the importance of ensuring that schools feel engaged. Members wanted to see what was developing, the changes that had taken place and what the priorities were compared with 10, 15 or 20 years ago and stated that this item should be brought to the committee relatively quickly, not in September but perhaps November.

AGREED ACTIONS:

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the contents of the report and agreed to discuss item KEY/19FEB18/01 – Healthy Schools (Item 21) at the group representatives meeting with the possibility of holding a joint meeting of the Children and Education and Health Scrutiny Committees.

12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

20th September 2018

CHAIRMAN
7.00pm to 8.44pm