

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE  
MEETING  
HELD AT 7PM ON TUESDAY 17 DECEMBER 2019  
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillors J Goodwin (Chairman), G Casey, N Day, A Dowson, C Harper, T Haynes, Jones, S Lane, L Robinson, B Rush, and Over

Co-opted Members A Kingsley and F Vettese.

**Also Present:** Councillor Ayres, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Education, Skills and University  
Councillor Sandford, Group Leader Liberal Democrats

**Officers Present:** Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Executive Director, People and Communities  
Jonathan Lewis, Service Director, Education  
Clare Buckingham, Strategic Education Place Planning Manager (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough)  
Toni Bailey, Assistant Director: SEND / Inclusion  
Sheelagh Sullivan – Head of SEN and Inclusion Services  
Louise Ravenscroft, Operations Manager, Family Voice Peterborough

**24. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Louise Coles; Councillor Harper attended as substitute. Apologies for absence were also received from Parish Councillor Co-opted Members Susie Lucas and Junaid Bhatti and Co-opted Member Peter Cantley.

**25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS**

Flavio Vettese declared a pecuniary interest as the Deputy Director of Schools for the Roman Catholic Diocese, in agenda item five, Proposal To Establish a New Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School In the Hamptons East Development and advised the committee he would be leaving the room for that item.

Alistair Kinsley declared a non-pecuniary interest for agenda items five and six, Proposal To Establish A New Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic Primary School In the Hamptons East Development and the Update Report on SEND (*Special educational needs and disability*) Local Area Inspection and SEND Joint Strategy as he was Chair of Hampton Academies Trust, a current provider of education in Hampton.

Councillor Casey declared a non-pecuniary interest in that he was a trustee for Family Voice and would stay present during the meeting for both items.

**26. MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 11 SEPTEMBER 2019.**

The minutes of the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 11 September 2019 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

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

There were no requests for call-in to consider.

At this point, Flavio Vettese left the meeting for the duration of the following item.

**28. PROPOSAL TO ESTABLISH A NEW VOLUNTARY AIDED ROMAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL IN THE HAMPTONS EAST DEVELOPMENT**

The Service Director, Education introduced the report which provided the committee with an update on the outcome of the initial consultation carried out by the Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia (RCDEA) regarding its proposal to establish a new voluntary aided primary school in the Hamptons East development of the City and the next steps in decision-making process.

Helen Bates, Assistant Director for Schools Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia addressed the Committee and advised that the school could open in 2022 with places in the nursery, reception and Year 1 and Year 2. When fully established the school would have capacity for 90 pupils (3 classes of 30) in all year groups from Reception to Year 6, rising to three classes per year group at capacity. The actual number of classes in the initial opening year would be reviewed should there be a significant increase in pupil numbers.

The Committee was advised that the greatest concern being expressed was the admission arrangements and the possibility of non-Catholic local children not being offered a place at the school. The RCDEA had therefore decided that in the event of the school being oversubscribed, to include in its over-subscription criteria the offer of one fifth of places in the first year to children based on the proximity to the school, referred to as "open places." Admission arrangements needed to be published one year at a time and future admission arrangements would need to be decided year on year. The placements for local children and Catholic children would be closely monitored and the admission policy could be altered to reflect these findings.

A recent study showed 89% of the pupils attending Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School and 92% of those attending St Thomas Moore Catholic Primary School lived less than two miles from school with most less than one mile from school.

The school aimed to offer parents the choice to select a school with a Christian ethos, which was respectful to all faiths and those without a faith, and with a good record of working with local communities. Of the 28 diocese schools, none had received an "Inadequate" Ofsted rating at their inspection.

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

- There had been no difference in the education provided in Roman Catholic and Church of England schools as they both had the same requirements to deliver the national curriculum.

- It was not the role of the Council to comment on why the diocese only agreed to make one fifth of places, “open places”.
- The Council would consider whether the place allocation would meet the needs of the local community when making the final decision and would be required to demonstrate due regard around access, trend in parental choice and meeting basic need as part of the decision making process.
- The diocese conducted their own consultation and therefore they determined when and how public events were held.
- It was the responsibility of the diocese to consult with local people, not the Council.
- Some Members felt that the analysis of responses had not illustrated the support and objections for the proposed school. There were 827 paper responses in favour of the school and a large number of responses from the wider community, however, it was not clear how the local population had responded.
- Officers had requested further analysis of data and the diocese had agreed to provide a further level of detail on responses. The second consultation would require a more qualitative response including specific feedback.
- The factors considered in the decision making process were the need for provision locally, parental preference in denominational education and the impact on basic need together with the legal considerations relevant to this type of application. The rationale for the decision would be included in the decision notice.
- It was also felt that there were discrepancies between the results of the paper and online consultations. There was no further information available as to how the consultation was conducted. The Service Director, Education advised that the consultation was carried out by the diocese and the Council could not challenge how the consultation was conducted.
- The Service Director, Education clarified that the report before the Committee had not sought to make a decision about whether or not the school should be established as an RC school and only concerned the process being undertaken.
- The impact of transport arrangements for the new school was one of the elements which would be considered under the guidance from the Department for Education (DfE).
- The Service Director, Education advised Members that Ofsted would be permitted to inspect the whole school curriculum however the religious education element was inspected externally. Collective worship would not be considered part of the curriculum from an inspection perspective.
- Concern was expressed that only 126 places of the total available once the school was fully operational would be “open places” and this could be insufficient, and Members sought assurance that the school place provision in the area would be adequate for the future given that Section 106 funding was for the local education need as a result of development. The Strategic Education Place Planning Manager advised that each year there would be a consultation process from October to January conducted to determine admission arrangements for all school place allocations and any proposed changes would be consulted on and published in advance.
- The Service Director, Education advised that the percentage of open places policy would only be applied when the school was oversubscribed.
- The Service Director, Education advised that the admissions criteria had not been proposed by the Council and they would only be able to consider the factors proposed, rather than challenge how many looked after children spaces had been allocated.
- Members were advised that the city had a mix of faith and non-faith schools, 13 schools out of the 80 existing were faith schools, the most recent addition being St Michael’s Church of England primary school in Cardea. Members were also advised that the National Curriculum applied to faith schools and clearly stated that two faiths must be taught.
- The Strategic Education Place Planning Manager advised that regulations had stated that the decision maker had to reach a decision within two months of the closing date of the representation period, which would be 19 February 2020. Currently there were no other approved proposals for the site from the DfE. The Service Director, Education also advised

that the most expensive option for the site would be via the free school presumption route, due to the fact that the Local Authority would be responsible for the funding.

- Members were informed that the DfE had already agreed funding for a faith school on the Hampton site and the final decision would be made by the Local Authority (LA) and the decision could not be subsequently overturned once implemented. The LA would take into consideration the results of the consultations and local opinion before making the decision.
- The Service Director, Education confirmed that the consultation responses could be shared, however it would be difficult to pinpoint the locality of responses as some had been received by email.
- Members were advised that if the proposed Voluntary Aided Roman Catholic School application was declined another school could be proposed and built on the site and opened by 2022 subject to planning approval.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note the latest position regarding the proposal by the Roman Catholic Diocese of East Anglia (RCDEA) to establish a new Voluntary Aided (VA) primary school in Peterborough.

## **29. UPDATE REPORT ON THE SEND LOCAL AREA INSPECTION AND SEND JOINT STRATEGY**

The Service Director, Education introduced the report which provided the Committee with feedback on the findings of the SEND Local Area Inspection and progress on the associated Written Statement of Action regarding the development and launch of the joint SEND strategy across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire.

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

- The balanced model outlined within the written statement of action, point 1.2c within appendix 1, involved joint commissioning contract to identify early intervention and support for speech and language development for SEND children. In addition, the High Needs Funding had been increased by approximately £3.5million through the dedicated schools budget grant, which could be used to commission early intervention to speed up support for children moving through the SEND process.
- Joint services had been commissioned for some childcare and health services but less so for SEND although there had been joint commissioning in speech and language but the inspection also identified that there was less officer time and commissioning allocated to health elements.
- The partnership governance improvements had included the Joint Executive Board which was made up of officers from health, education and social care who hold the Authority to account for delivery of the SEND strategy. Under the Joint Child Health and Wellbeing Commissioning Unit there was another executive group comprising of all health providers, including the Chief Executives of the hospitals, Cambridgeshire and Peterborough NHS Foundation Trust (CPFT) Cambridge Community Services, and commissioners from the Local Authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG).
- The Operations Manager from Family Voice Peterborough commented that the SEND strategy was one of the most co-produced documents they had experienced.
- The training pro forma had been agreed with the health and social care providers which would help with quality assurance, enabling training to be monitored, repeated or modified as appropriate.

- A quality assurance role had been created and systems improved for monitoring the contributions to the education, health and care plans on the recommendations of Ofsted and a new health co-ordinator had also been appointed to be part of all decision making.
- The backlog in annual reviews of the Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) which had replaced statements, was a national issue and the EHCP demanded a more detailed review with more associated work and a number of new posts had been agreed. The SEND reform grant was used to facilitate the changeover to EHCPs had ended whilst at the same time numbers increased as growth in the city increased.
- There were plans to increase special school provision at Heltwaite and Marshfield Schools. Peterborough had a high proportion of pupils in special provision but where possible, children would be retained in their local mainstream schools with additional support. The hub approach had been developed, with specific areas of expertise to expand the number of specialist placements within mainstream schools which would give parents more choice and increase school support across the city.
- As part of the Education Select Committee review, the government was committed to carrying out a full national review on SEND which could influence the Ofsted requirements.
- Although resources continued to be a challenge, there was a commitment from health, social care and carer forum to work together, the focus being on elements highlighted in the Ofsted report.
- The complaints procedure was run through the local authority process available on the website and was included in the corporate complaint reports. Part of the quality assurance role included data analysis of complaints received and report back on where improvements could be made. The main complaint received related to timeliness.
- Members sought clarification over whether there were issues with any specific education providers in relation to SEND cases and were advised that all schools and academies would be challenged on their delivery of SEND.
- The SEND strategy would be re-examined through the Committees work programme in September and the written statement of action would be closely monitored by Ofsted and the CQC. Quarterly reports would be submitted and there would be quarterly follow-up visit. It was anticipated that the CQC would return in approximately 18 months.
- Plans for a transition officer role were being explored as the model had worked in other authorities. The role may be located between the college and schools to follow pupils through the transition from school through the first term at college although there were currently no resources available.
- Training for teaching assistants (TAs) who spend time with SEND was offered however, it had been dissolved due to insufficient take up. In previous years, training had been well attended and it may be re-introduced in the future.
- The Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) network was considering establishing a TA network to offer training support.
- The teaching school in Hampton Hargate offered a TA training programme which could be accessed via the Local Authority and there was more training in schools on behaviour management which had proved very popular with head teachers.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

1. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report, agreed the following actions and **RESOLVED** to note:
  - a) The latest position regarding the findings of the SEND Local Area Inspection and the associated Written Statement of Action; and
  - b) Endorsed actions taken so far in relation to the development and launch of the joint SEND Strategy across Peterborough and Cambridgeshire;

2. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee requested that the Executive Director, People and Communities would provide a report to the Committee in September 2020 in relation to the progress of the actions being undertaken as a result of the SEND Written Statement of Action;
3. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee requested that the Head of SEN and Inclusion Services would provide Members with information in relation to the latest behaviour management training being offered to Teachers for SEN children.

**30. CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING START TIME  
2020-2021**

The Democratic Services Officer introduced the report in relation to meeting start times for municipal year 2020-2021. The report provided the Committee with the opportunity to discuss and agreed the start time of future meetings.

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee agreed to continue to start meetings at 7pm.

**AGREED ACTIONS:**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to agree the start time for all Children and Education Scrutiny Committee meetings for the Municipal Year 2020-21 as being 7:00pm.

**31. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Committee received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan of Executive Decisions, containing key decisions which the Leader of the Council anticipated Cabinet or Cabinet Members would take over 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.

**AGREED ACTIONS:**

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

**32. WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2019/2020**

The Democratic Services Officer presented the report which considered the work programme for the municipal year 2019/20 and discussed the inclusion of the proposal to establish a new voluntary aided faith school in the city.

**AGREED ACTIONS:**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee **RESOLVED** to note the work programme for 2019 – 2020.

**33. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday, 13 January 2020.

CHAIRMAN

7.00pm to 20:20pm

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