

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE MEETING  
HELD AT 7.00PM, ON  
THURSDAY 14 JULY 2022  
BOURGES/VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

**Committee Members Present:** Councillors L Robinson (Chair), M Farooq, S Farooq, C Fenner, S Hemraj, C Hogg, S Lane, D Over, R Ray, B Rush and H Skibsted and Co-opted Member Parish Councillor Michael Samways and Independent Co-opted Members Sameena Aziz and Peter Cantley.

**Also in attendance:** Eva Woods and Kira Balogh Youth Council Representatives.

**Officers Present:** Jonathan Lewis, Director of Education  
Toni Bailey, Assistant Director SEND and Inclusion  
Emma Harkin, Head of SEN&I Services  
Paulina Ford, Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Charlotte Cameron, Democratic Services Officer

**Also Present:** Councillor Lynne Ayres, Cabinet Member for Childrens Services, Education, Skills and University  
Louise Ravenscroft, Operations Manager Family Voice

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Shaheed and Cllr Hogg was in attendance as substitute.

Apologies were also received from Cllr Lane and Co-opted member Flavio Vettese.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND WHIPPING DECLARATIONS**

No declarations of interest or whipping declarations were received.

**3. MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY 2022**

The minutes of the Children and Education Scrutiny Meeting held on 20 January 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record.

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

No call ins were received.

**5. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS 2022/23**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to the appointment of Co-opted Members in accordance with the Council's Constitution Part 3, Section 4 – Overview and Scrutiny Functions.

The purpose of the report was to seek approval from the Committee to appoint Sameena Aziz and Parish Councillor Michael Samways as Non-Voting Co-opted Members for the municipal year 2022/23 to the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee in accordance with Part 3, Section 4 –Overview and Scrutiny Functions.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer introduced the report and explained that the nominations for Parish Council Co-opted Members had been put forward by the Parish Council Liaison Committee and that the appointments would be reviewed annually.

The Committee unanimously agreed to the appointments of Sameena Aziz and Parish Councillor Michael Samways as Non-Voting Co-opted Members for the municipal year 2022/23.

The Chair welcomed the Co-opted Members who were in attendance and invited them to join the committee for the rest of the meeting.

It was noted that Parish Councillor Samways had advised he would be late.

#### **AGREED ACTIONS**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to make the following appointments:

1. Appoint Sameena Aziz as an Independent Co-opted Member with no voting rights to represent the Muslim Community for the municipal year 2022/2023. Appointment to be reviewed annually at the beginning of the next municipal year.
2. Appoint Parish Councillor Michael Samways as a Co-opted Member with no voting rights to represent the rural area for the municipal year 2022/2023. Appointment to be reviewed annually at the beginning of the next municipal year.

#### **6. UPDATE ON LASEND ACCELERATED PROGRESS PLAN SUBMISSION**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to the updated LASEND accelerated progress plan submission.

The report provided an update on activity associated to the Ofsted (Local Area Special Educational Needs and Disability (LASEND) inspection conducted in June 2019 and revisited in January 2022.

The Assistant Director SEND and Inclusion accompanied by the Head of SEN&I Services introduced the report and key points raised included:

The report referred to the LASEND inspection which was conducted in 2019 and addressed the 5 areas of weakness identified by Ofsted. The Department for Education (DfE) and the Care Quality Commission (CQC) returned to test those areas in January 2022 and concluded that significant progress had been made in 4 out of the 5 areas. The one area to deal with was focused on post-16 and the provision for young people aged 18 to 25 18-25 concerns.

The Accelerated Progress Plan (APP) detailed in the report outlined how the Council were going to address the final area of weakness. The APP had been presented to the DfE and

the team were waiting for their approval. After approval, there would be a monitoring process where the DfE would visit every six months to review any progress.

Officers noted that the target was to make the appropriate progress within the next twelve months and that the DfE had informed them that it had never agreed to remove an APP within the first six months.

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

- Members asked if the findings of the inspection met the self-evaluation of Officers in the service area. Officers advised that the inspection did outline areas of weakness that were expected as a result of the Council not showing the impact of work in that area.
- Members referred to section 4.8 of the report and asked for an update of the progress of those areas for development. Members were advised that a steering group had been formed to drive forward the actions in the APP which would be maintained after the conclusion of the APP.
- Members queried what would need to be done to have a self-regulating SEND inspection system. Officers referred to a consultation of local area inspections which was being written and that work had been done with Cambridgeshire to review and compare inspection processes.
- The Director of Education introduced the new Head of SEN&I Services and emphasised that this piece of work would be a priority.
- Members referred to the report's emphasis on protocols and sought clarification on whether this was a national Ofsted priority or only the directive for Peterborough. Members were advised that the post-16 agenda was a national issue and that most councils under inspection were in the same position.
- Members queried if the next inspection would be focused on a different set of priorities. The Officer referred to the consultation on the new inspection framework and identified that the focus would remain on the impact.
- Members referred to the review process on page 23 and sought clarification on whether there would be internal reviews before the DfE returned in six months. Members were advised that the steering group would meet on a monthly basis to monitor progress and that there were other teams like the Peterborough SEND Operational Group who were reviewing specific parts of the progress.
- Members noted the concerns round 18–25-year-old provision and the numerous stakeholders who were involved in that area of work. Members sought clarification on who was leading on work to address those concerns. Officers advised that there was a joint plan where there were individual responsibilities outlined and addressed for the local authority.
- Officers commented that the transition from children services into adult services had been identified as an area for improvement and advised that work had been undertaken to improve engagement with young people.
- Members referred to the mental health support teams on page 22 and asked if they would be rolled out to all schools in Peterborough. Officers advised that it was an offer for all schools but that there would not be physical teams in all schools.
- Members noted the success of area leaders in the increased access to support services and sought clarification on how that increase had been achieved. Members were advised that there were several actions schools could take to receive support but that some did struggle due to capacity and the Covid-19 pandemic. It was also advised that there was a structured system which allowed for an increase in demand.

- Members noted that there was no quality assurance framework for the local areas and sought clarification on the training provided to SEND teachers. Officers advised that schools were responsible in identifying the skills they would need to meet the needs of any educational care plan. It was acknowledged that parents have the best knowledge of what their child would need, and that best practice would be to engage in conversations with parents and the child's education provider.
- The Director of Education commented on the Special Educational Need Coordinator (SENCo) network which would offer and develop that training for staff. It was advised that SENCo network capacity issues were a national issue and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provisions (AP) Green Paper would address some changes in relation to that.
- Members queried what work had been done to encourage residents to participate in the Green Paper Review. The Officers advised that the team developed an initial thoughts response to the twenty-two questions and ran several virtual sessions with individuals within the various services to capture their thoughts. The responses were then combined to produce a balanced response that reflected the local authority response.
- The Director of Education referred to Louise Ravenscroft from Family Voice and the work done to help families interpret and respond to the Green Paper.
- Louise Ravenscroft was in attendance at the meeting and was invited to address the Committee at the invitation of the Chair and highlighted the importance of parent voice. Members were advised of work undertaken to increase the range of parent carers who were being heard and the priority to ensure parents and young carers were shaping the local authority's response.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

1. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note and comment on the report.
2. The Committee also requested that the Assistant Director SEND & Inclusion provide the Committee with a briefing note on public feedback responses to the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and Alternative Provisions (AP) Green Paper.

## **7. PETERBOROUGH SEND UPDATE: HUB PROVISION AND SERVICE PERFORMANCE**

The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee received a report in relation to Peterborough's SEND Hub Provision and Service Performance.

The purpose of this report was to provide an update on activity associated with the Peterborough SEND Hub provision and service performance

The Assistant Director SEND and Inclusion accompanied by the Head of SEN&I Services introduced the report and highlighted key items including:

The report gave a full history of the hubs which began in 2016 and formed an integral part of the SEND and Inclusion strategy. The hubs were an option that young people could use to access support earlier, without having to go to a specialist. This would allow them to remain in mainstream education.

The Officers highlighted that the overall purpose of the hubs was to provide appropriate provision for a child which would allow them to reengage with mainstream education. One

exception would be the hub in one of Peterborough's special education schools where some children needed a specialist pathway into a specialist school.

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

- Members asked if there was a robust system in place that ensured children were moved to the right educational provisions at the right time. Officers advised that there was a panel system and a carefully performed referral process that constantly reviewed if a child needed to be moved. Some children had requested a place in the hub but sometimes the team had found more appropriate ways of supporting those children.
- Members were advised that the hierarchy of educational provision worked together as a graduate response and children could move into each of the stages if they needed to.
- Members queried if pupils from outside of Peterborough were able to access the hubs. Members were advised that there were children outside of Peterborough in the hubs and that the Council had a duty to offer an equitable service for all children in Peterborough schools.
- Members sought clarification on how secure the funding for the hubs was. The Officers identified that the hub approach was cheaper than a specialist school approach and there were plans to increase hub provision in the city. The funding system was agreed with the schools through a tiered system which allowed funding to be divided by the level of resilience, training and expertise each hub provided.
- Members acknowledged the need to increase hub provision for children with autism and asked how that had been identified. Members were informed that this was a growth area nationally where there had been improvements in earlier diagnosis.
- Members asked that if there was no constraint on budget, how many places would be suitable for the support needed. It was advised that there were 66 places, and two new hubs would bring that to 76 places. Officers also advised that the hubs were seen as a saving mechanism which would help to reduce costs.
- The Director of Education added that hubs were funded by a dedicated schools grant and not the Council's budget. Members were advised that the Council was one of few local authorities who were in a surplus.
- Members referred to the impact of the review of the hubs and asked if responses had been sought from service users. Officers advised that the success of hub provision was measured by working with sites themselves and that engagement had increased with Family Voice and other forums to help reach out to parents.
- Members noted that the hubs provided a yearly report pack and queried whether there should be an internal inspection. Officers advised that a coordinator for the hubs had been employed in order to quality assure the hubs and improve on service level directorates.
- Members followed up and asked how the yearly report fitted in with the Ofsted inspections. Members were advised that having the yearly reports and the coordinator would be recognised by Ofsted as best practice for ensuring hubs were able to meet their potential.
- Members asked if the SEND Hubs had the capacity to cope with the specialist needs across the city and meet school and parent expectations. Officers referred to the panel system used for referrals and advised that it used a multi-agency approach to ensure the right choices were made.
- Members sought clarification on how the hubs worked and what teaching mechanisms were used. Members were advised that the hubs were flexible in their approach to meet the needs of the children in their area.

- Officers advised that some schools received funding for a hub space that would be run independently from the schools but recognised the needs of children in that school.
- Members asked whether parents could give the preference for their child to attend a hub when applying for places at school. Members were advised that parents were able to choose any school they prefer and would likely choose the schools with the hubs that would meet their child's needs.
- Members sought clarification on what would happen if a hub refused a child as they were unable to meet their needs. Officers acknowledged that this could happen and emphasised that this would not be a refusal but a referral to somewhere better equipped. If a hub were to refuse a child, they would need to provide evidence for that decision.
- Members asked whether there were any children with specialist needs who were not in school. Members were advised that there were no children accessing no type of educational provision but that some parents may feel that the provision of the local school did not meet their child's need.
- Members acknowledged the need to enhance performance and sought clarification on support that the designated education investment areas the Government had outlined. Officers referred to the Council's Capital Bill Strategy which reviewed if the team had appropriate financial provisions and if any bids for funding would need to be made.
- Members referred to the SEND Hub numbers on page 60 and sought clarification on how the funding for each hub was allocated. Members were advised that each hub received a standard band payment and additional funding was provided per child.
- Members asked if children were not accessing hubs because of difficulties in accessing resources like transport. Officers advised that children qualified for transport if they lived a specific distance away but acknowledged that this would not be a viable option for all when individual needs were considered.
- Members noted the graphs on page 62 that showed the activity levels for Education Health and Care Needs Assessments (EHCNA) and asked if the hubs had helped the application plans of under 5's to be below the national average. Members were advised that there had been an impact in seeing behaviours earlier which had allowed children to go through the assessment process at an earlier stage.
- The Director for Education added that there was growing support for early years provision and that the Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) had been improved and more money was being targeted at investing in their support.
- Members referred to the permanent exclusion rates on page 66 which was noted as being double the national average and sought clarification on what that figure was now. Members were advised that while Officers did not have the specific number it was still above the national average and a specific number would be brought back to the Committee.

## **AGREED ACTIONS**

1. The Children and Education Scrutiny Committee considered the report and **RESOLVED** to note and comment on the report.
2. The Committee also requested that the Director of Education include in his next Service Director report exclusion rate figures, broken down by age.

## **8. REVIEW OF 2021/2022 AND WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022/2023**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer presented the report which considered the relevant items presented in 2021/2022 to the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee

and looked at the work programme for the new municipal year 2022/23 to determine the Committees priorities. Members also noted the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

- There were no points raised.

### **AGREED ACTIONS**

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

1. Consider items presented to the Children and Education Scrutiny Committee during 2021/2022 and make recommendations on the future monitoring of these items where necessary.
2. Determine its priorities and approve the draft work programme for 2022/2023 attached at Appendix 1.
3. Note 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 2.

## **9. FORWARD PLAN OF EXECUTIVE DECISIONS**

The Senior Democratic Officer 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 sought clarification on what had been done with the non-key decision item Werrington fields and Ken Stimpson Secondary School. The Director of Education advised that the DfE had a role in school playing fields and the Council had sought advice from them. Members were advised that an update on the item would be provided.

### **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 the following:

- That the Director of Education provide the committee with a briefing note on Forward Plan Non-Key Decision Werrington Fields and Ken Stimpson Secondary School.

## **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was noted as being 8 September 2022.

CHAIR

Meeting began at 7.00pm and ended at 8.21pm

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