



Leicester  
City Council

Minutes of the Meeting of the  
CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMISSION

Held: TUESDAY, 19 SEPTEMBER 2023 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Batool (Chair)

Councillor Haq  
Councillor Dr Moore

Councillor Pantling  
Councillor Pickering

In Attendance

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**13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Barnes, Martin Samuels and Jennifer Day.

**14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any interests they may have had in the business to be discussed.

There were no declarations of interest.

**15. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Education Scrutiny Commission held on 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

**16. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair announced Martin Samuels, Strategic Director Social Care and Education would be leaving Leicester City Council. On behalf of the

commission thanked him for his knowledge and support and wished him good luck for the future.

The next meeting date would now be held on 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023.

## **17. PETITIONS**

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

## **18. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS, AND STATEMENTS OF CASE**

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

## **19. FAMILY HUBS**

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education submitted a report updating the commission on the progress towards the Family Hubs model in line with the Family Hubs and Start for Life programme funded by the DfE. The focus was being placed on developing an integrated network of support both online and at physical locations across Leicester in line with the programme's 178 minimum expectations.

The report and the following points were noted:

- 75 Local Authorities had been selected by the DfE and DHSC as being eligible to receive a share of £300m funding. The 75 LAs that were provided with funding, were the ones with the highest deprivation levels.
- 5 Local Authorities had been chosen in the East Midlands:
  - Leicester City
  - Derby City
  - Lincolnshire
  - Northamptonshire
  - Nottingham
- Additional Authorities were given the opportunity to apply for a smaller amount of funding, which Leicestershire County were successful in that bid.
- The purpose of family hubs were intended to provide a central access point to enable families to receive support and advice from an increased number of touchpoints, across the city. This includes a number of main buildings explicitly named as Family Hubs, with co-located teams of specialist services and a network of buildings, that may already be accessed by families and are accessible to families. There would also be a Virtual Family Hub, via a website.
- There are 178 minimum expectations attached to the funding.
- Family Hubs funding has to be evidenced to developing and delivering the start to life offer which covers children from conception to 2 years old, 1001 critical days.
- The Family Hub offers support, advice and services for people during pregnancy and those with children from 0-19 or up to 25 for those with

special educational needs and disabilities.

- The Family Hub Network would bring partners from across all sectors (health, social care, leisure) to work together to provide joined up local services for children, young people and families. This localised offer would improve access to services and improve the connections between families and professionals, services and providers.
- Work would be completed together for the benefit of children, young people and families in Leicester, helping them to build trusting and supportive relationships and meeting their needs in a way that is accessible to them.
- The plan was initially released to LCC on 8 February 2023, which realised the funding for year one. The final revised version was submitted on 25 August 2023 and the policy would be confirmed in the next few weeks.

The Chair thanked the team for their presentation and the hard work that had been put into the Family Hubs Programme, to overcome challenges and frustrations faced with the guidance and contact provided by the DfE.

In response to Members questions it was noted that:

- Family Hubs were a new beginning to ensure LCCs own workforce would be integral with training.
- The Family Hubs were there to replace and improve the existing services, to give a universal offering of support that would be accessible to everyone.
- Training was being offered across the teams internal workforce, including all of the Early Help Practitioners across the 12 children, Young People And Family Centres.
- As part of the sustainability of Family Hubs, would be for volunteers to be trained to be able to help with support needs.
- The five key family hub sites wont all be one of the existing children, Young People And Family Centres.
- The 178 expectations were decided by the Central Government. The requirements from LCC are to provide services and improve outcomes and support within the community.
- Work would continue with schools across the City, to look at how we can provide training with the kind of professionals within the school setting. Keep in touch meetings were happening with head teachers to talk to them about family hubs and what it would mean for families and schools.
- Children, Young People and Family centres would now be funded out of the general fund.
- Two parent champions would attend the Family Hubs Programme Board, to assure their voices are represented.
- People within the community would receive training, to be able to engage within their communities to understand the needs which will support the planning and skills required within the communities.
- The team had been working really hard to ensure a balance between meeting family's needs, with positive contributions and ensuring the

Family Hub Programmes requirements were met.

AGREED:

1. The commission notes the report and thanks officers for the presentation.
2. Family Hubs to stay on the work programme and bring an update to the commission in 6 months' time.
3. Comments and suggestions made by Members be noted.

## **20. CHILDREN AND SOCIAL CARE**

The new Director of Childrens Social Care, Damian Elcock introduced himself to the Commission and talked to Members about the service and his previous experience.

The Chair thanked Damian for joining the meeting and introducing himself.

## **21. UNACCOMPANIED ASYLUM-SEEKING CHILDREN (UASC)**

The Head of Corporate Parenting and The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education provided a verbal update on the current situation on Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC).

The following update was provided:

- In Leicester today there was currently 48 UASC, 3 referrals were being dealt with by National Transfer Scheme (NTS). 2 more were due to arrive on Cycle 39. Making the total 53 children.
- The background communities were Afghan, Iranian, Sudanese, Syrian and Egyptian.
- 47 children were male and 1 female.
- 10 children were in, in-house and IFA foster care. 2 were in a residential. 36 were in supported living, as the majority of arrivals were 16+.
- There had been 6 spontaneous arrivals.
- 11 had been placed in hotels as adults and claimed to be children on arrival in the City.
- Local Authorities with high numbers of UASC, notably Kent and some London Boroughs were transferring UASC to all regions across the UK on a rota and take turns to receive UASC.
- The UASC rota started on 1 July 2016 and was voluntary. It was made mandatory on 23 November 2021.
- Frequency of cycles varied according to the weather & pressure on SE Local authorities.
- Improved weather in August, saw 5 cycles in 3 weeks.
- The quota for Leicester City Council for UASC was 86 under based on 0.1% of the children population.
- Options were being explored to expand the placement sufficiency in the provision.

- The Home Office does fund part of our placements and care system, however it does not fund the total cost of UASC.
- For young people who come through the National Transfer Scheme, we are guaranteed finances up to their 18<sup>th</sup> Birthday.
- If young peoples cases were under review with the Home Office and an asylum claim has not been completed, the Home Office can refuse to fund LCC.

As part of the discussions it was noted that, at the Strategic Migration Board, Members and Officers from Local Authorities would come together, alongside the Home Office team to specifically look at development around UASC Accommodation and how collectively work can be done to improve the system that isn't working correctly.

AGREED:

1. The Chair to follow up by email with questions.
2. Members to be kept informed of any key issues.
3. Comments to be taken on board.

## **22. AN UPDATE ON RAAC IN LEICESTER CITY SCHOOLS**

The Strategic Director of City Development and Neighbourhood Services presented a presentation and gave a verbal update to the Commission on the latest position of RAAC in Leicester City Schools. It was noted that:

- RAAC was extensively used in building across the 1950s and 1980s in post war construction.
- RAAC was originally intended to have a 30 year life span.
- The codes of practice associated with the design of RAAC from the 1950s to 1980s were CP114 Reinforced Concrete in Buildings and CP116 Structural Use of Precast Concrete.
- The building codes recommended minimum end bearings of only 45mm for roof panels and 60mm for floor panels.
- Structural concerns of RAAC had been known about, the concerns around RAAC first emerged more seriously in 2018 which focused on a management style approach and to review it periodically.
- Since 2018 the guidance continued to evolve. In December 2022 the DfE changed the guidance significantly and introduced a 5 stage process.
- In April 2023 the Institute of Engineers (IStructE) issued guidance on being more definitive in relation to end bearings. It was stated that any end bearings below 75mm presented unacceptable structural risk to buildings.
- The first school in the UK to be assessed under the new guidance was Mayflower Primary School. LCC were the first Local Authority to get involved with RAAC and move the situation forward in terms of

information that was given to the DfE and look more closely at the ramifications of the IStructE Guidance.

- An analysis of every single school was completed based on age of construction type.
- Focus visits had been conducted between LCC and the DfE. Any school closures or agreements were agreed between LCC and the DfE technical advisor to ensure a joint approach with the education body.
- Mayflower School was having a temporary school built, this was being completed by the DfE. LCC were supporting with help from the Planning and Estates provision.
- The two schools affected in Leicester are Mayflower Primary School and Parks Primary School.
- Work has been quickly to avoid an impact on children's education. Parks Primary were operating from two local council owned buildings.
- LCC were meeting weekly with the DfE to ensure that the education settings is right for children and staff.
- Parks Primary will have to have a temporary school arrangement, which was being put into place. They will also require a full rebuild.
- RAAC isn't exclusive to schools. 1500 analysis checks had been completed on LCC buildings and 100 site visits. Only 1 building was being looked at more closely with intrusive surveys, all other buildings had been confirmed as not having RAAC.
- All LCC housing stock had also been confirmed as non RAAC.

The following was noted from discussions and questions from Members:

- RAAC can sometimes structurally look similar to other concrete panels. This was the case at Willowbrook School, which is an academy in Leicester and had a number of intrusive surveys which determined it wasn't RAAC.
- The mean average at Mayflower School was 52mm. The survey went through every panel centrally and by the end every ceiling in the school had been pulled down.
- Mayflower School was an unexpected event and within 48 hours we a face to face provision was put into place.
- LCC pushed the DfE and advised they did not want the children to be located over several sites and was able to grant permission for a temporary school to be built in one location.
- The building that was due to have a more intrusive survey, the RAAC was only located in an isolated area, this had been closed off and the rest of the building was operational.
- One special school had concerns and a survey was completed. The surveys were handled in a different way, to cause minimal disruption to the children attending.

AGREED:

Members had been reassured that possible rack issues in schools were being addressed and all schools in the city have the requirements for the safety standards.

**23. WORK PROGRAMME**

Members of the Commission were invited to consider content of the work programme and were invited to make suggestions for additions as appropriate to be brought to future meetings.

**24. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There being no other business, the meeting closed at 8.34pm.

