



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: TUESDAY, 19 OCTOBER 2021 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T :

Councillor Cole (Vice Chair in the Chair)

Councillor Batool

Councillor Riyait

Councillor Pandya

In Attendance:

Councillor Cutkelvin – Assistant City Mayor for Education and Housing

Standing Invitees (Non-Voting)

Joseph Wyglendacz

Teaching Unions

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Gee, Pickering, Wilmott, and Russell, Janet McKenna, and Carolyn Lewis.

Councillor Cole noted that Councillor Gee was absent and that as Vice-Chair, he would Chair the meeting.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People, and Education Scrutiny Commission held 2 September 2021 be confirmed as a correct record.

4. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

5. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that none had been received.

6. COVID-19 UPDATE AND VACCINATIONS IN LEICESTER SCHOOLS

Officers updated the Commission on the continued impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on Children, Young People and Education Services in the city. It was noted that:

- There had been a fall in infection rates in school age children, and the rates in Leicester were less than half of the national average. Schools would need to continue to monitor cases and advise parents when necessary.
- Lots of work was going into the vaccination program for schools. There had been challenges with regards to concerns about the vaccine. After the Covid school vaccination program was over there would be a Flu school vaccination program.
- The hope was that pupils would soon get used to a more normal school environment.

In response to Member's questions it was noted that:

- DFE had announced that CO2 monitors would be distributed to schools for ventilation purposes, these were slowly being rolled out. Filtration systems had been requested of DFE in order to help with ventilation of smaller rooms where additional support was often provided.
- Take-up figures for the school vaccination program were not yet available, but it looked as though in some schools it was very low. This low take up was potentially linked to issues surrounding the online consent form. Figures for take up would span across all the city's schools not considering governance arrangements.
- There had been Comms work around the vaccine for pupils. Including webinars on YouTube.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission notes the update.

7. REPORT ON GOVERNMENT SCHOOL SUPPORT PROGRAMME

Sue Welford, Principal Education Officer, presented the item. It was noted that:

- Due to the significant amount of time schools spent closed since 2020, DFE had set up a number of schemes to support catch up.
- Additional funding was available for 1-1 support, including the National

Tutoring Program which provided strictly 15 hours of work for each identified pupil.

- Other catch up funding was available for a range of other work, including creative activities and summer schools.
- There was a recovery premium available for schools eligible for free schools meals.
- Spending on these schemes was to be monitored closely.
- A wide range of initiatives and programmes were ongoing to support pupils' mental health and wellbeing during the return to full-time education.

In response to Member's questions it was noted that:

- These different programs were being funded from several different pots with separate monitoring.
- Funds went directly into academies, and into the Local Authority for maintained schools. The amount given to each school would be determined by a formula based on the number of students eligible for pupil premium. There was also a small amount for CLA.
- Schools could spend funding money how they chose, however they would have to justify how it met the purpose of the funding.
- Schools had been positive around the recovery premium due to its flexibility.
- There were concerns around the strict number of hours in the National Tutoring Program, preventing pupils who might need additional time from receiving it.
- Schools had to partially cover the costs of the tutors in the National Programme. There had been a positive reaction from schools that had joined the Programme, so it was hoped that this would encourage others to participate.
- Agencies provided the tutors for the programme, with schools choosing an agency. Most tutoring was provided in-school.
- The key criteria for success was the impact on CYP.
- No support had been promised past the end of the financial year.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission notes the update.

8. LEICESTER CITY CHILDREN'S RIGHTS AND PARTICIPATION SERVICE 2020/21 ANNUAL REPORT

Caroline Tote, Director of Social Care and Early Help, presented the item. It was noted that:

- Participation was at the centre of the Council's approach to CYP services.
- Work had been ongoing to develop the children's rights and advocacy offer in the city.

- Advocacy surgeries had been set up for those CYP who felt their voices weren't heard.
- The YPC had been linked with the CEC, the CICC had been replaced by Generation Select which was based on a co-production position.
- The Lundy model of participation had been implemented; the aim was to promote this across the whole department.
- Parents and carers were also included in the co-production process with Parent Champions which had been nationally awarded.
- Generation Select had recently concluded its second enquiry.
- The aim was to increase mystery shopper type programs as part of the assurance process.

In response to Member's questions it was noted that:

- The Council's participation work had received national praise. Professor Lundy had promoted the implementation of her model in Leicester.
- Participation Officers were in demand from other Local Authorities and local partners hoping to learn about Leicester's participation approach.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission notes the report and congratulates the Service on their achievements in the past year.
2. That possibilities be explored to strengthen the relationship between the Young People's Council and City Councillors.

9. REVIEW OF MAINSTREAM SCHOOL FUNDING FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS & DISABILITIES

Martin Samuels, Strategic Director for Social Care and Education, introduced the item. It was noted that for the majority of SEN CYP, mainstream schools were the best option. All funding for mainstream schools to support SEN CYP came from the ringfenced high needs block from the dedicated school grant, which also paid for special schools. The ringfenced nature of the fund meant that no additional money could be added to it, therefore the funding would need to be allocated as efficiently as possible.

Tracie Rees, Director for Adult Social Care and Commissioning presented the item, it was noted that:

- The Commission was briefed in June on how the money was currently allocated.
- An engagement process with stakeholders on the allocation had taken place which had received a limited response.
- This fed into a formal consultation which began in September. This consultation would look to make the allocation fairer, more child-centric, and transparent.

- A number of questions from headteachers had already been received.
- The results of the consultation would be brought to a future Commission meeting.

In response to Member's questions it was noted that:

- Schools had yet to agree to any of the options outlined in the consultation.
- There were already processes schools had to go through when spending money from this ringfenced fund. One of the aims of the consultation was to streamline those processes and forms.
- The ringfenced nature of this fund meant that it wouldn't be impacted by any budget cuts from the Council.
- For the schools that would lose out on money in this consultation, a quality inclusion team had been developed to support them, looking at best practice. Any support funding had yet to be built into the changes, there would be a long lead-in time so any decisions about additional support could be made.
- For every school that would lose funding under the proposed changes, another school would gain that funding.
- Whilst there appeared to be a decrease in the proposed budget, this was still being spent in the area such as for city CYP who went to county schools.
- It was unlikely that Covid would result in a smaller participation in the consultation.
- A range of sessions were being offered to various stakeholders participating in the consultation.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission notes the report and looks forward to seeing the outcomes.

10. DIVISIONAL 3-YEAR STRATEGIES EDUCATION & SEND

Martin Samuels, Strategic Director for Social Care and Education, introduced the item. It was noted that when he wanted all parts of the Social Care Services to have a clear sense of what outcomes were desired. In line with this each division in the department came up with a standard-format, 3-year strategy. The goal was to make these strategies readable for the general public. These strategies would feed into a living implementation plan.

Sue Welford, Principal Education Officer, presented the 3-year strategy for the Education division. It was noted that:

- Five priorities for improvement were set out in the strategy.
- There was a need to strengthen partnerships with schools.
- There was a need to improve engagement and promote inclusion for those CYP missing out on quality education.

Tracie Rees, Director for Adult Social Care and Commissioning, presented the 3-year strategy for SEND. It was noted that:

- There were 3000 CYP in the city who had care plans, and 7000 who had SEN but had no care plan.
- The strategy had been developed in conjunction with the parent and carer forum.
- Priorities included greater co-production with bodies such as the parent and carer forum and big mouth forum, and a greater focus on inclusion to enable SEN CYP to be educated in mainstream schools.
- There was a need to manage the increase in SEN CYP.

Making sure SEN CYP were prepared for adulthood and could have a smooth transition into Adult Social Care Services was also a priority. In response to Member's questions, it was noted that:

- These strategies would be able to help form the case why maintained schools should stay with the Local Authority instead of becoming academies.
- The hope was to bring targets on attainment into the core education strategy.
- The groups outlined in priority 5 on the education strategy were those demographics of CYP doing statistically poorer in Leicester compared to the national level. Priority 4 of the strategy spoke about improving outcome for all CYP to prepare for life destinations.
- There was a number of CYP coming off the school roll due to moving or emigrating, the Service worked with the Home Office to monitor this. The Service also worked with CYP coming into the city, supporting them to get a school place which also required working with local partners.
- There was a national rise in CYP receiving home schooling which was being seen in Leicester, this included SEN CYP. However several of those who had left the school roll were now reapplying to get school places.
- The teaching school hubs for Leicester were based in Rushey Mead Academy and Christ the King Primary, each hub had it's own priorities and Key performance Indicators.
- Sector lead improvement work was on a regional level, based on sharing good practice, in this case on early years work.
- Various assistive technologies were currently being used for SEN CYP. Moving forward a wide range of assistive technologies would be looked at, the main focus in this area was maintaining best practice.
- The ethos for the departmental strategy was a person-centred approach, enabling people to live the life they choose. This ethos was captured in the core statement for the department.
- Collaboration with academies would be required as 40% of pupils in the city were now in academies.

RESOLVED:

1. That the Commission notes the divisional 3-year strategies.

11. DYSLEXIA SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS

It was noted that in the Chair's absence, this item would be deferred to the next meeting of the Commission.

12. MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OFFER IN SCHOOLS

It was noted that this update had been covered in the Report on Government School Support Programme item.

13. OFSTED INSPECTIONS UPDATE

Martin Samuels, Strategic Director for Social Care and Education, presented a verbal update on the recent Ofsted inspection of CYP Services that had taken place in September.

- The inspectors spent 2 weeks on site and were focused entirely on the experiences of CYP.
- A huge amount of feedback had been generated, and a number of areas to move forward in had been identified.
- The feedback from the inspection would feed into the implementation plans of the 3-year strategies.
- The final report would be published on 12 November and there was still scope for it to change before publishing.
- The experience of being inspected had been positive.
- The published report would be brought to the Commission.

14. 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.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Members noted their thanks to Officers for the recent training session they had received and requested that the slides from the session they were shown be circulated to all Councillors.

It was noted that this was Ayleena Thomas' last meeting as a Democratic Services Officer. Officers and Members thanked her for her work supporting the Commission and other meetings and wished her the best of luck in the future.