



Leicester  
City Council

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

Held: TUESDAY, 14 APRIL 2026 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Batool – Chair  
Councillor Bonham – Vice Chair

Councillor Cole  
Councillor Singh Sangha

Councillor Gregg

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**214. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

It was noted that no apologies were received.

**215. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The Chair asked members to declare any interests in proceedings for which there were none.

**216. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Chair highlighted that the minutes from the meeting held on Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March were included in the agenda pack and asked Members to confirm whether they were an accurate record.

AGREED:

- It was agreed that the minutes for the meeting on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2025 were a correct record.

**217. CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and explained that there were technical issues with the microphones.

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

It was noted that none had been received.

## **219. PETITIONS**

It was noted that none had been received.

## **220. OFSTED INSPECTION - VERBAL UPDATE**

The Assistant City Mayor for Children and Young People introduced the item noting the success of having received 7 mixed ratings of Outstanding and Good from the inspections of children's homes.

The Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help gave a brief update on Ofsted Inspection of Children's Homes, including inspection frequency, what was included and current gradings. The following was noted:

- All of the city children's home were inspected at least once annually.
- Among the homes visited, it was noted that Nether Hall Road, a provider for young people with disabilities and Autism, had been rated Outstanding, and Pine Lodge had been rated Good.
- Leaving Care Services had received a focussed unrated visit. Observations would be published in the following week and updates would come to the Scrutiny Commission early in the new municipal year. Ofsted had announced changes to its framework, with headline judgements being removed. Inspection activity would instead be linked to a leadership judgement. Ratings would still be issued, but there would not be an overall rating for the Local Authority.

In response to member comments and questions, the following was noted:

- A further home was pending Ofsted registration and was expected to open in the late summer. Approval for capital funding was being sought for two further homes. One site being located just outside the city boundary, and the other would be a 2 to 3 bed provision for children with liberty restrictions.
- The primary focus in relation to children placed outside the city was not financial. While the aim was to keep children close to home, some were placed outside the city to reduce risk and potential for exploitation. New homes would improve city capacity and reduce the numbers of young people being placed in private homes outside of the city. There was an emphasis on residential care assisting in independent living for young people transitioning to adulthood.
- Private provision had previously been cheaper, but this was no longer the case, with in-house provision delivering better value. A long term strategy of up to 5 to 10 years would support stability and prioritise care within the city where it was safe and appropriate.

- Strong examples of information sharing included participation in the Regional Approval Alliance, enabling the exchange of best practice across the East Midlands, involvement in a Peer Challenge event, and the application of therapeutic interventions for children on the edge of care.
- The next Ofsted report findings would be shared with the Commission.
- AGREED:
  1. That the Commission note the update.

## **221. MULTI AGENCY CHILD PROTECTION TEAM - PROGRESS UPDATE**

The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education and the Director of Children's Social Work and Early Help submitted a report on the development of Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams (MACPTs). The Strategic Director for Social Care and Education provided an overview to the Commission. Key points to note were as follows:

- This was a part of the development of the Government Family-First development programme.
- The multi-agency child protection teams were due to go live in 2027. These would cover some of the high-level work currently in place such as independent child protection chairs, complex investigations, (often joining with the police on Section 47 investigations) and investigating allegations against professionals.
- The establishment of multi-agency teams comprising Health, Education, Police, and experienced Social Workers would support Family Help Teams by improving oversight, strengthening information sharing, and enabling more advanced investigations.
- Joint conversations were taking place with Leicestershire County Council and Rutland to create a unified model, whilst allowing for city specifics and also future proofing for the upcoming Local Government Organisation.
- A report could come back to the Commission in Autumn setting out the new model.

In response to member questions and comments, the following was noted:

- Regarding the multi-agency Child Protection teams, it would be vital for colleagues to have shared access to all core systems such as Police and Health systems, this would enable real time safeguarding work.
- The establishment of the multi-agency working teams would improve timeliness, meeting and conference attendance, and the ability to access information.
- Multi-agency work supported early intervention for those at risk of entering care. This included Family Group Conferencing, Multi-Systemic Therapy, and developing alternative family support systems. Further

updates on care interventions could come in the new municipal year.

- There was an emphasis on maintaining consistent relationships with children and young people, with inbuilt support for existing workers to remain in place.
- Recent figures indicated that Social Workers in Children in Need teams typically managed around 18 children each. For the Single Assessment Teams, this averaged to around 22/23 children. The model would change with the progression to the Family Help Teams. 20 more experienced Social Workers were due to start in the coming weeks.
- Outcomes for the multi-agency teams would be measured by a number of factors. This would include; monitoring the number of children prevented from entering care, numbers of serious harm incidents and via Ofsted inspections.
- The Quarter 4 report would come to Scrutiny in the early municipal year and trajectories could be examined.
- The six local Family Help Teams acted as the primary case holders, supported by a single team providing additional expertise and capacity, while maintaining local knowledge and strong relationships with children and families. The Family Hubs would be crucial for connectivity.
- The Education sector would become a statutory partner, strengthening outcomes.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission note the report.

## **222. SCHOOLS WHITE PAPER**

The Director for Send and Education submitted a report on the Schools White Paper 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' for Leicester City. The following was noted:

An introduction was provided by the Assistant City Mayor for Children and Young People outlining the Schools White Paper as a positive and ambitious direction of travel, noting that much of the work already underway locally aligned well with government expectations, particularly in relation to inclusion and the development of DSPs.

- The White Paper covered the whole school system and was not limited to SEND, with a renewed national focus on academic standards alongside inclusion, and an expectation of further movement of schools towards academy status.
- SEND remained a key national focus, with increasing demand and rising costs over recent years creating an unsustainable system, and that the government intended to address this through a 10 year reform programme.
- The reforms aimed to ensure that more children could be supported within mainstream settings, with schools expected to develop internal provision and inclusive practices, supported by government policy and

funding mechanisms.

- It was highlighted that inclusion and high standards must be delivered together, with a stronger emphasis on early intervention, improved integration of services, and reducing reliance on specialist and independent placements over time.
- The Local Authority role was described as a system convener, with greater responsibility placed on schools to make decisions and deliver support, supported by strengthened partnerships with health and other professionals.
- Leicester was noted to be in a strong position, with existing early intervention approaches, established partnerships, and access to specialist expertise such as speech and language support, which would be built upon as part of the reforms.
- Local Authorities nationally would receive support with High Needs Block deficits, with central government indicating it would cover 90% of these deficits.
- It was acknowledged that the scale and pace of change would place significant pressure on schools and the wider system, and that supporting schools through this transition would be critical.
- Workforce development was identified as a key priority, with a focus on training and an 'experts on hand' model, noting that Leicester already had strong foundations in this area.
- Local areas were required to submit a Local SEND Reform Plan by June 2026, with Year 1 delivery commencing in the 2026 to 2027 academic year. This placed an expectation on the local system to begin implementation at pace, while further national policy and legislative detail continued to be developed.
- It was confirmed that the plan would be co-produced with a wide range of stakeholders including schools, health partners, the ICB, parents, children and young people, and education professionals, with workshops taking place across the city including within family hubs.
- Members were advised that implementation would begin in the next academic year, with delivery continuing through to 2027 alongside wider legislative changes, including reforms to EHCP processes.
- A national consultation was highlighted, consisting of 70 questions, with a closing date of 8th May, and Members were encouraged to submit responses or send over any feedback to Governance Services to support a coordinated council response.

In discussion with Members and Young Peoples Council, the following was noted:

- Support was expressed for the 'experts on hand' model, alongside concern regarding consistency across local authorities, with a request that progress and impacts be reported back to the Commission.
- It was confirmed that ongoing monitoring would take place, with regular engagement established with academy trust CEOs to support strategic discussions and address concerns.
- Positive engagement from secondary schools was noted, particularly in

relation to inclusion, belonging and improving outcomes for children and young people.

- It was highlighted that academy trusts would be subject to Ofsted inspection, strengthening accountability arrangements.
- Clarification was provided that funding and support arrangements would apply consistently regardless of whether a child attended an academy or maintained school, with increased expectations on schools to meet needs without reliance on EHCPs alone.
- It was noted that Element 3 funding would provide additional resources to schools to support children with higher levels of need.
- The importance of bringing primary schools along in the reforms was raised, with reassurance provided that strong relationships existed across the primary sector and mechanisms were in place to engage all schools
- It was acknowledged that some schools were already demonstrating strong inclusive practice and effectively prioritising the needs of children despite system challenges.
- Concerns were raised regarding sufficiency of local SEND provision, with it confirmed that while additional places were being developed, including 300 new places in mainstream schools, demand continued to exceed supply and further work was ongoing.
- Reducing demand through earlier intervention remained a key priority, alongside capital investment to expand provision and reshape the education estate.
- The Commission highlighted the scale and challenge of developing the local SEND reform plan within the required timeframe and sought clarity on the co-production approach. It was confirmed that engagement had taken place across partners and stakeholders, with a focus on capturing a wide range of views within the constrained timescales, and that further co production would continue as the programme progressed.
- Recognition was given to the scale of work already undertaken, particularly in relation to DSPs, with a request for assurance on consistency of inclusive practice across mainstream schools.
- It was confirmed that specialist teachers, quality assurance mechanisms, and inclusion reviews would support monitoring and improvement across schools.

AGREED:

1. An update on the Schools White Paper and local SEND reform plan be brought back to the Commission in September.
2. The current council response to the national consultation be circulated to Members.

## **223. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair reminded Members that should there be any items they wish to be considered for the work programme then to share these with her and the senior

governance officer.

The chair thanked all commission members and officers for their support during the municipal year.

**224. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 18:46.