



Leicester
City Council

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

Held: MONDAY, 30 NOVEMBER 2020 at 5:30 pm

P R E S E N T:

Councillor Dawood (Chair)
Councillor Cole (Vice Chair)

Councillor Pantling

Councillor Whittle

In Attendance:

Councillor Cutkelvin, Assistant City Mayor - Education and Housing
Councillor Russell, Deputy City Mayor - Social Care and Anti-Poverty

Also Present:

Gerry Hurst - Roman Catholic Diocese
Carolyn Lewis - Church of England Diocese
Mr Mohit Sharma - Parent Governor
Joseph Wyglendacz - Teaching Unions Representative

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87. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Riyait and Janet McKenna.

88. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Cole declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting that his wife was a school governor.

Councillor Pantling declared an Other Disclosable Interest in the general business of the meeting that she was a school governor.

In accordance with the Council's Code of Conduct, these interests were not

considered so significant that they were likely to prejudice the Councillors' judgement of the public interests. The Councillors were not therefore required to withdraw from the meeting during consideration and discussion of the agenda items.

89. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED:

that the minutes of the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission meeting held on 29 September 2020 be confirmed as a correct record.

90. PETITIONS

The Monitoring Officer reported that no petitions had been received.

91. QUESTIONS, REPRESENTATIONS AND STATEMENTS OF CASE

The Monitoring Officer reported that no questions, representations or statements of case had been received.

92. DRAFT LEICESTER LOCAL PLAN (2020 - 2036) PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Director of Planning, Development and Transportation submitted a presentation on the Draft Leicester Local Plan (2020 – 2036) Public Consultation.

During the presentation, the Head of Planning drew particular attention to the following points;

- The Government were consulting on a new approach to Planning; however the Planning White Paper would radically change the local plan process, national policies, a zoning approach and much more permitted development and changes to the way in which housing demand would be worked out.
- Leicester City Council had decided to continue with their Local Plan as the timespan for the implementation of the White Paper could be two or more years.
- The importance of the local plan which looked ahead up until 2036, sought to look at the Councils need for homes, addressing unemployment, shopping, and leisure facilities and allocate sites for the these.
- The plan also set out a range of the Council's planning policies (e.g. Climate Change and Public Health), encouraged investment & economic growth, facilitated place-making and set high quality design expectations.
- Housing site draft allocations were noted, these made up a range of 5 main strategic sites and approximately 85 other sites significantly located in the city centre and Brownfield sites.
- Sites for school development provisions being proposed with particular

reference to remit of this Commission included; Beauchamp City Free School (Ashton Green East), Castle Mead Academy (St. Augustine's), Brook Mead Academy (Groby Road/Fosse Road North), Avanti Fields Free School (Manor Farm/Collis Crescent) and Metropolitan Academy (Former Bus Depot, Abbey Park Road) however it was noted that the Metropolitan Academy site may now be not taken as the funding application had been withdrawn.

- Housing allocations which would affect six school playing field sites and were identified as potentially suitable development sites included in draft Local Plan consultation were noted as: Beaumont Lodge; Buswells Lodge; Herrick; Judgemeadow; Linden and Rowlatts schools. These were all subject to consultation responses from residents, schools, Sport England, etc.
- The Commission's attention was also drawn to other relevant proposed development allocations: Manor House Playing Fields; Neston Gardens Playing Fields; former Southfields School & Newry Learning Centre; Forest Lodge Education Centre and Land off Hazeldene Road.
- The Head of Planning expressed that allocations in the draft local plan were not currently fixed and it was requested that Members of the Commission engage and encourage people to engage in the consultation. Any representations received would be carefully considered and also careful consideration made to points made by Members of the Commission.

The Commission scrutinised the Draft Local Plan, commenting as follows;

- There was some concern amongst a few Members of the Commission in relation to play spaces/ areas for children which had been identified for housing site developments. It was further expressed that the loss of these play sites impacted the health and wellbeing of children. The Assistant City Mayor for Education and Housing noted that the commission could have a broader umbrella that also looked at places which impact children such as play spaces/ areas rather than just school sites.
- The Head of Planning also clarified that it was not proposed to allocate all the sites or build on all sites, it was planned to enhance green spaces and where there were developments it would be looked to improve the adjacent green spaces. If there was an impact on children's play areas, the local plan would be looking to re-provide, enhance or make mitigation – any suggestions of places that would benefit from this enhancement/ investment were welcomed.
- Due to several factors' and fluctuation of patterns over time, it would be difficult to know the demand for the number of children going to schools in 20-30 years' time. The Assistant City Mayor for Education and Housing agreed to bring back to the commission details about Pupil Place Planning, which was carried out every 5-10 years and allowed for an estimation of these numbers to be achieved as well as a whole range of factors that would also need to be monitored going forward.
- The difference of arrangements between City Council schools/ academies fund distribution and approvals was explained as well as

Department for Education and Skills (DFES) calculations.

- There were concerns that some diverse groups could have been isolated due to the language barrier of the consultation. The Head of Planning responded that a standard language translation was available upon request and the leaflet drop to every home also had a variety of languages which pointed towards the consultation taking place.
- Concerns of replacement oversupply and undersupply of open sites would more be included in the next consultation.
- In regard to the Metropolitan Academy, dialogue with Education colleagues would need to take place to see if there was a justification to safeguard/ retain that site or if it could be allocated residential redevelopment. Feedback was being awaited and the site would be kept under review.
- In relation to concerns about loss of open space and loss of green spaces, it was responded that the local plan would look at the sufficiency of open space and sites would only be allocated where there was a surplus of open space.
- It was confirmed that all schools with potential site allocation had received correspondence.
- In terms of the next stages of process; any particular areas of concern or recommendations from this Commission would then go to the Overview Select Committee and then Full Council February 2021. Following this, another public consultation would take place. The Submission of Local Plan Consultation (Reg 19) would take place Autumn 2021 and the adoption Summer/Autumn 2022.

AGREED:

1. That the presentation be noted.
2. To be updated on the schools playing sites selection process and in addition be informed of the measures that the Council put in place to address the loss of playing fields, playing spaces as well as the monitoring of developer contributions.
3. To return in 2021 at the next point of public consultation with the local plan in full.

93. ANNUAL REPORTS SUMMARY (SAFEGUARDING AND YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN)

The Committee were asked to consider the recommendations of the Director for Social Care and Early Help contained in the reports.

(i) LOCAL AUTHORITY DESIGNATED OFFICER (LADO) ANNUAL REPORT 2019/ 2020

The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) annual report was aimed to provide an overview of the management of allegations against the children's workforce and the role of the LADO in Leicester City for the period 1 April 2019 to 31 March 2020.

All to note;

- Every year a report must be produced in line with the statutory guidance.
- The LADO is responsible for the managing of the process of investigation into allegations of harm made against adults who work with children.
- The presenting officer highlighted performance data and noted that the demand of the service had remained the same as the previous year.
- There were 304 LADO contacts per year, 1 third of which were concluded with advice and guidance (Leicester City Council were one of the few authorities who had built this into their LADO service) and 35% of LADO contacts had led to an investigation.
- Leicester City Councils (LCC) LADO service held a very good reputation amongst their partners and were working well with them. The service also had a very robust approach, an extensive range of indicators to measure how the function was performing and these were presenting a good picture.
- LADO was noted as one of the features of social care that Ofsted looked at, therefore it was important to maintain and continue strengthening this part of the service.
- The service was confident that their advice line was leading to lesser referrals coming through and the contacts were provided with the correct information to progress where necessary.
- In terms of case closures, it was clarified that there was occasionally no control over the length of time for LADO's ability to conclude a case due to the variety of people involved in dealing with a case.

Members of the Commission thanked all officers associated for their hard work in dealing with this challenging and difficult area of work.

AGREED:

1. Members of the Commission noted the work and activities undertaken by Leicester City's Designated Officer and were pleased to see the extensive list of strengths identified in the report.
2. That the areas of improvement be monitored and an update of progression on those areas be provided at the next meeting.

(ii) ANNUAL REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS SERVICE 2019/ 2020

The Independent Reviewing Officers' Service operated within the context of Leicester City Council being the 'Corporate Parent' for all of the children and young people in its care. The statutory IROs responsibilities were defined by the IRO Handbook (2010).

In addition to the information outlined in the report, the following was

noted;

- The Council were well placed for Ofsted's next inspections.
- There was a challenge to get young people into employment and training especially as opportunities had reduced significantly. There currently existed a Connexions service and personal support via 16+ team and other colleagues. However, it was continued to work towards seeing if other opportunities could be identified.
- For some young people it was important to ensure their placement was stable and they were in the right place to properly access an education or employment offer.
- It was an essential need to increase the opportunities in the workplace or training provisions for young people that found it hard to sustain these practices.
- The IRO Service Manager which contacted each individual child for their feedback and the offered opportunity to further engage with an advocate was explained to the Commission. It was noted that any concerns raised, whether this was via complaint or feedback would be sent back through to the Service Manager otherwise it would be referred to the IRO.
- The most recent statistics showed that 65% of our young people were in education, employment or training.

Several Members of the Commission congratulated the Officers/ team and confirmed the importance of children having a voice.

AGREED;

1. That the work and activities undertaken by Leicester City's Independent Reviewing Officers Service be noted.
2. The Commission recognised the many positives in the report and also recognised the hard work of the team of IRO's.
3. To request a future report which particularly focused on; need, what we are doing well, how we compare nationally and how we can improve the situation.

(iii) LEICESTER CITY YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN 2020-21

The purpose of the report was to review the statutory Youth Justice Plan for 2020-21, directing any comments to the Head of Service for Early Help and Prevention.

In addition to the information outlined in the report, the presenting Officer noted the following and responded to queries from Members of the Commission;

- There had been positive progress for the service and the young people that the service was working with including a 10% reduction in young people becoming first time entrants.
- A Member of the Commission hoped that a funding element could be found in the future to support the 'prevention' element of the

service.

- In relation to performance indicators, targets would be set, in January 2021 by looking at what was achieved in the 2020 year and what could be done for the upcoming year.
- In relation to the pandemic this year, it was reported that locally there was a slight increase in the number of young people coming into custody compared with the previous year.
- Currently developing a 'POP' pathway which was the Prevention of Offending Pathway (POP). This would also tie into the knife crime strategy piece of work taking place with the Assistant City Mayor for Neighbourhood Services.
- It was noted that during the pandemic there had seen an initial decrease in offending behaviour but an increase in social isolation and mental health issues was reported and also young people who disengaged with the service, as the means had moved to a virtual platform for a period of time. However, the service had completely recovered from that and caught up with any back log and no issues arose.
- In response to a Members query it was confirmed that Leicester City had not seen a notable increase in criminal exploitation during the pandemic.
- A Commission Member commented that the partnership between the Police, Youth Service and Social Services was very positive.
- A Member of the Commission drew attention to the graphs on p133. The Officer clarified that the graph showed results for the number of young people who completed each of the sessions in a group work programme called 'Which Way'. For the next report the Officer agreed to make it much clearer that the blue referenced knowledge prior to completing the session and red indicated progress made after completing session.
- In terms of priorities for the next year, one of these would be to focus on young people who had an education health care plan and open to the youth justice service. In addition, it would be aimed to ensure that the service was being inclusive in supporting those young people with any additional needs.
- Highlighting the work of a task and finish group to explore disproportionality in relation to ethnicity, a survey was carried out with staff which showed that some members of staff would like more training in areas like racial disparity and disproportionality. In addition, staff welcomed opportunities to take part in the reverse mentoring scheme, be able to learn from colleagues from other ethnicities and be able to gain more confidence to talk about ethnicity and culture with young people.
- The work was still underway, however initial findings highlighted that processes in place were not always routinely used to explore the impact of offending behaviour on a young person's culture and ethnicity, an example being the 'Case Management Diversity Panel'. This panel provided a platform for case managers to present cases for additional scrutiny and support where they were

high risk or to explore diversity and culture, most officers used this platform to review risk, this has recently improved. The work was almost at conclusion with a report and recommendations being presented to the Youth Justice Management Board on 15 December 2020.

- The Chair gave congratulations that issues in diversity were now being discussed in such an open manner.
- It was requested that this topic was a future report to be brought on the task group.
- The knife crime strategic delivery group alongside police, probation and health colleagues had been a feature to influence what the priorities for the plan would look like going forward. There was a section on Children and Young People and the vast majority of the 10 indicators were supported by the Youth Justice Service and the Youth Service. The main focus was prevention and pursuit.
- A project called 'Safer routes for schools' allowed for detached youth work teams to go out between 3pm and 6pm at key schools where it was known to have a higher rate of knife crime incidents. The service would then do detached youth work to focus targeting work with young people to reduce that prevalence.
- In relation to young people and mental health, the service had a dedicated ACE team whereby Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) had provided 2 full time workers who were focused on adverse childhood experiences i.e. trauma related instances in childhood. All of the Youth Justice Service had been fully trained in ACE trauma and due to this success, it had been negotiated through CAMHS to have ACE training for all practitioners within Early Help and Prevention and later Children's Social Care.
- It was noted that the service was well aware that when looking at behaviours it was important that ADHD factors were being considered in addition to those ACE behaviours as responses would be different depending on the origins of the behaviour.
- The presenting officer explained in more detail the following points; inspection recommendations and attendance at the management board.

AGREED:

1. That the Commission welcome and note the progress made against the priorities outlined within the Leicester City Youth Justice Plan for 2020-21
2. The next annual report to come back would be due April/ May 2021.
3. It was requested that equalities comments in terms of the task and finish group report would be brought back to a future meeting.
4. The Commission welcome the honesty and openness of dealing with ethnicity and diversity as a service.

94. EDGE OF CARE INTERVENTIONS SUMMARY REPORT QUARTER ONE: 2020-21

The Director of Social Care & Early help submitted this report is to provide a progress update to the Children, Young People and Schools Scrutiny Commission on the delivery of interventions that were part of the edge of care offer within the Early Help and Prevention Service. Due to the range of complex interventions referred to, this report was supported by a presentation.

All to note;

- The report covered April – June 2020 and highlighted the approach to edge of care services including all stages.
- Early help was an aim and the vision of approach to identify the best possible outcome for the family and child.
- The philosophy of the division was clear that it was preferred that the child stayed with the family if this was at all possible.
- Members of the Commission passed thanks for the service of which the Council could be proud of.

It was noted that the Head of Service for Early Help would be leaving the Council. The officer Jackie Difolco was thanked for her dedication, professionalism, determination and enthusiasm to get everything right for the children of Leicester. The officer was wished all the best.

AGREED:

1. That the commission note the work, passion and recognition of the Head of Service for Early Help.
2. That the content of the report be noted.
3. For a future report to be brought back to the commission in 6 months.
4. That the hard work of the team be congratulated and noted.

95. COVID-19 UPDATE

The Strategic Director of Social Care and Education provided a verbal update in relation to the impact of Covid-19.

Child Social Care - All to note;

- Some areas of the service had been difficult to continue in the circumstances, however, it was important to note the significant amount of areas of the service that had continued to provide normal services.
- There was good partnership which was working well.
- The number of safeguarding referrals was the same as when under normal circumstances and all had been dealt with efficiently.
- Some pressures during the pandemic were noted, including women presenting late in pregnancies, largely due to a mistaken belief that NHS services were no longer available to them, and as they had received no antenatal service this would present a safeguarding issue.
- The service was getting ready for the completion of the current full lockdown and work had been done as to what could and could not open.

- The service was also working with the latest DFE guidance in order to continue work aspects on a face to face basis.

Schools – All to note;

- It was important to draw attention to the amount of work being done by schools. The latest figures indicated a clear reduction of safety concerns and showed that Leicester City schools now had 77% attendance which was very similar to the position of statistical neighbours in the same tier.
- Although it was found that there was a fair number of infection cases identified in schools, there was very little evidence of transmission in schools, with the large majority of cases infected in the wider community.
- One issue putting pressures on schools was that self-isolation numbers in schools was reported as 10% of staff and students isolating at any one time. It was therefore being looked at whether staff testing could be greater in order to avoid full 14-day isolation.
- Another impact of schools/ classes isolating was that this had other effects such as parents couldn't go to work, strain on marriages/ relationships etc.
- Another challenge for schools was that 3 quarters of year 11 students had to isolate over the last term and had therefore missed an average of 20% attendance. This aspect needed to be focused on to ensure the learning experience was as good as it could be.
- Conversations were currently taking place with the Department for Education to determine what the testing approach would be in schools. There were currently 2 schools in the city taking part in a national pilot.
- The unpleasantness for children of the process of testing was noted, and it was anticipated that in 3 months' time it may be possible to produce results from just saliva tests.
- In regard to vaccinations, the NHS were starting the general roll out process, however there were no firm plans in place for schools, but a lot of work was required to consider what would be appropriate.

96. FUTURE WORK PROGRAMME

The Commission's Work Programme was submitted for information and comment.

The strategic Director for Social Care and Education would inform the Chair of the Commission of potential future items for the agenda.

AGREED:

That the Work programme be noted.

97. CLOSE OF MEETING

The meeting closed at 8:39pm.