

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

LEARNING, CULTURE AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY (O&S) COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

13:30 hours on Wednesday 17th April 2019, Committee Rooms 3 & 4 – Actions

Present:

Councillor Mariam Khan (Chair)

Councillors: Alex Aitken (Deputy Chair), Gary Sambrook, Kath Scott, and Martin Straker Welds.

Other Voting Representatives: Rabia Shami, Parent Governor Representative and Sarah Smith, Church of England Diocese Representative

Also Present:

Councillor Jayne Francis, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture

Anne Ainsworth, AD for Skills & Employability

Symon Easton, Head of Cultural Development

Rose Kiely, Group Overview & Scrutiny Manager

Clare Nankivell, Data, Performance & Information Strategy Manager

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Sarah Sinclair, AD, Children and Young People Commissioning

Lindsey Trivett, Head of Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centres

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING

The Chairman advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's Internet site (www.civico.net/birmingham) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there were confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were submitted on behalf of Councillors: Mary Locke, Mike Sharpe, Ron Storer and Adam Hardy, Roman Catholic Diocese Representative.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None.

4. ACTION NOTES

(See document 1).

RESOLVED:

The action notes of the meeting held on the 6th March 2019 were confirmed.

5. CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION, SKILLS AND CULTURE

(See document 2).

Councillor Jayne Francis, Cabinet Member for Education, Skills and Culture, Anne Ainsworth, AD for Skills & Employability and Symon Easton, Head of Cultural Development presented the item and answered Members' questions.

The following were among the main points the Cabinet Member raised in her presentation:

- There has been a reconfiguration of the directorate and Dr Tim O'Neill has been appointed as the Director for Education and Skills.
- BEP is commissioned up to the summer of 2020 for school improvement.
- There has been significant improvement in the School Admissions Service and there has been an investment of £120,000 for a new staffing structure. The redesign process will conclude by June 2019. There has also been an investment in the management systems to improve the experience of the families using the service.
- School funding is a national issue and to alleviate the financial pressures some schools are closing early. The Cabinet Member has requested officers report back on which schools these are so the Council can work alongside them to help reduce the impact on the children's education.
- There have been significant issues with two local primary schools in recent months regarding a small group of vocal parents concerned about how equalities issues are being taught in schools. Alongside Cllr Cotton, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, Community Safety and Equalities, the Cabinet Member is working with parents, schools, media and local MPs to try and have a coherent message in support of those schools. The Cabinet Member together with Cllr Kate Booth, Cabinet Member for Children's Wellbeing, has visited the two schools to give support to the Head Teachers who have been under pressure. The Cabinet Member has also spoken at a conference for head teachers to talk about what as a Council we can do to be more visible and provide support to schools and significant work is continuing on this.

- They have appointed a Libraries Working Group of Councillors who are assisting with the review of the library service and they will be reporting over the remainder of the year.
- They are awaiting a response from the Millennium Point Trust regarding the proposal of the City Council to take on the lease of Millennium Point so they can sub-let to the Birmingham Museum Trust.
- Martin Green has been appointed as the Chief Creative Officer for the Commonwealth Games and will be responsible for the overall culture programme for the Commonwealth Games.
- The Cabinet Member felt that there is a more coherent dialogue with Commonwealth Games officers regarding the involvement of children and young people and there are real opportunities, such as volunteering.

In discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the following were among the main points raised:

- The Cabinet Member takes on board how organisations can interpret data, such as school funding and officers are looking at how they can improve data and understand the challenges.
- The 10 arts organisations that the Council funds have maintained a strong education and outreach programme. The Council commissions projects in communities and there is also available funding from other organisations.
- They are looking at a new strategy for employment and skills in Birmingham, bringing the services together and looking as to how the services contribute to improving employment and skills. It is expected that the performance information and targets will therefore change.
- Although the demand for the Admissions Service will be reducing (drop in birth rates etc) there are no plans to reduce the service as the redesign has been about improving the service.
- With regards to the suggestion that the Schools Forum decisions are reported to the Committee:
 - Officers will check the legal position as to whether decisions can be reported to the Committee.
 - The Schools Forum is a public organisation and Councillors and the public should be able to see all the papers and the decisions that have been taken on the website. As per the good practice guide 'Local Authorities should ensure that the website is easy to find and accessible and it is good practice that papers are published a week in advance'. However, the Chair stated that the website is not up-to-date, as the papers for the March meeting are not on and January's meeting states 2018 and not 2019.
- Councillor Sambrook stated that some members of the Committee have previously expressed that how the committee has been set up and structured has not worked properly this year. The Cabinet Member has three Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Committee has four Cabinet Member areas to look at. It was thought that this is disjointed and can get very complicated and does not assist with scrutinising. The Cabinet Member was asked her views on this and how it can be improved. The Cabinet Member stated that alongside her colleagues she liked to think they worked well together and shared information. However, Councillor

Sambrook was not the first person to make that suggestion because there are huge areas of overlap and they will take those issues away and report back.

- An education strand for the Commonwealth Games has recently been established and the AD for Skills & Employability will be leading on this.
- The Knife Angel will be installed by the 8th May 2019 in Victoria Square subject to the survey for the foundation. There will be a programme around knife crime working with communities etc. Members suggested that schools are informed of this and this could be linked to an invite to a visit to the Council House.

RESOLVED:

The update was noted and Members will be provided with the following:

- Information on the LGBTQI Youth Group and if there are links into the No Outsiders Programme.
- Members to be provided with the web link to the ward information for school performance as Members were informed this should be on the Council's website.
- Schools Forum:
 - Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) – an update on the virement between blocks.
 - Report back on the legal position regarding whether the Schools Forum decisions can be reported to the Committee.
 - An update as to the issues regarding the Schools Forum papers on the Council's website.
- The Cabinet Member to report back as to how the committee can be improved for the new municipal year.
- Details of the schools that will pilot the Car Free School Streets.

6. CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ANNUAL REPORT

(See documents 3 & 4).

Lindsey Trivett, Head of Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centres, Clare Nankivell, Data, Performance & Information Strategy Manager and Sarah Sinclair, Children and Young People Commissioning were in attendance.

Lindsey Trivett, Head of Early Years, Childcare and Children's Centres introduced the item and informed Members that the Council has a statutory duty to ensure there is childcare available for working parents and also sufficient early education places for all 3 and 4 year olds and some 2 year olds and because of the education aspect it has fallen under this committee. Also, they have to report annually to elected members as to what the sufficiency looks like and following this the information has to be available to parents. The report is still draft as they wanted Members' input before final sign off.

Clare Nankivell, Data, Performance & Information Strategy Manager undertook the presentation. In discussion, and in response to Members' questions, the following were among the main points raised:

- The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) (statutory framework for children aged 0 to 5 years) requires all provision to be fully inclusive, so the Council and Ofsted have an expectation that provision should be fully inclusive for all children's needs. Birmingham has the Inclusion Support for Early Years (ISEY) funding system, where there is £1m set aside from the DSG for children who may not necessarily have an EHC plan but have additional needs. The funding is not always sufficient to fund the whole entitlement. However, there is some really good work across the sector being undertaken to support children with SEND.
- With regards to areas where there is an under or over supply, officers have looked at migration and movement across the city, for instance there is an oversupply in Edgbaston and deficit in Harborne, however, families in Harborne are using the provision in Edgbaston.
- The supply for the 2 year olds has been taken up by the Private, Voluntary and Independent (PVI) sector in the main because parents want to access more flexible provision than school settings provide. The implication is that because the children are settled in the settings, parents are then less likely to move them to a school nursery class. Raising awareness with schools on improving the school nursery offer is a key priority for officers.
- With regards to the Council's sufficiency and managing the market role, they are going to revise the current processes the Council uses, particularly the terms and conditions for early education funding and the process that is used when schools want to establish or reduce the numbers of their published admission numbers for nursery school age.
- One of the services they offer under the Early Years Support Service is support for home education where a child has additional needs.
- Consultation with parents over the next 12 months is a priority for the service so they can understand why parents are choosing to access or not access their early years entitlement.
- There has been a dip with the take up because they had a big system change with the Early Years Health and Wellbeing contract. However the early years networks are being re-established and they are working with the provider - Birmingham Forward Steps, to pick the work back up.
- They work with the Virtual School for children who are in care so they can access suitable provision.

RESOLVED:

The update was noted and Members will be provided with the following:

- Information on the support provided to families who have children with additional needs and who are home educated (to include details on how the support can be accessed).

7. WORK PROGRAMME

(See document 5).

The Chair updated Members as follows:

- She has spoken to the Deputy Leader in relation to the issues regarding the split with the two committees, the number of Cabinet Members within the committee's remit and SEND being discussed at two committees. The Deputy Leader has invited Members to feedback directly and Members can suggest proposals as to how improvements can be made.
- Due to the tight timescales for the Young People and Mental Health report to go to City Council it was decided that this can be picked up by the new Committee as the work deserved not to be rushed.

The Chair thanked Members for their contribution to the work of the Committee, Councillor Aitken for covering when she was unwell and the support of the Scrutiny Officers.

RESOLVED:

The Work Programme was noted.

8. DATES OF MEETINGS

The proposed dates will be e-mailed to Members, however, these may change if the structure of the committee changes.

9. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS

None.

10. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

11. AUTHORITY TO CHAIRMAN AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED:

That in an urgent situation between meetings the Chair, jointly with the relevant Chief Officer, has authority to act on behalf of the Committee.

The meeting ended at 1545 hours.