

BIRMINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE O&S

COMMITTEE – PUBLIC MEETING

**1000 hours on Wednesday, 22 February 2023, Committee Rooms 3 & 4,
Council House, Victoria Square, B1 1BB**

Action Notes

Present:

Councillor Kerry Jenkins (Chair)

Councillors: Jilly Bermingham, Debbie Clancy, Des Hughes, Morriam Jan, and Shehla Moledina

Other Representatives: Rabia Shami, Parent Governor

Also Present:

Cllr. Karen McCarthy, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families

Fiona Bottrill, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Manager

Tim Boyes, Chief Executive, Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP)

Razia Butt, Independent Education Adviser

Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families

Clare Nankivell, Data, Performance & Information Strategy Manager

Kate Reynolds, AD, Lifelong Learning & Employability

Amanda Simcox, Scrutiny Officer

Claire Williams, Consortia Partner, BEP

1. NOTICE OF RECORDING/WEBCAST

The Chair advised that this meeting would be webcast for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's meeting You Tube site (www.youtube.com/channel/UCT2kT7ZRPFCXq6_5dnVnYlw) and that members of the press/public may record and take photographs except where there are confidential or exempt items.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Cllrs. Shabina Bano and Simon Morrall, Justine Lomas, Roman Catholic Diocese, Osamugi Ogbe, Parent Governor, and Sarah Smith, Church of England Diocese.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded they must declare all relevant pecuniary and other registerable interests arising from any business to be discussed at this meeting, and none were declared.

4. ACTION NOTES

(See documents Nos. 1, 2 & 3)

The action notes of the committee meeting held on the 4th January 2023 were agreed subject to the following being added under the Children and Families Directorate Improvement Plan – Progress Update item:

Cllr. Des Hughes raised concerns that there was little substance in the update and there was no information for which progress could be measured over time. Cllr. Karen McCarthy, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families agreed to provide the details of the improvement plan.

RESOLVED:

That:

- The action notes of the adjourned committee meeting held on 30th November 2022, and the reconvened committee meeting held on the 25th January 2023 were agreed.
- The action notes of the committee meeting held on the 4th January 2023 were agreed subject to the amendment.

5. ACTION TRACKER

(See document No. 4)

Cllr. Des Hughes raised the outstanding issue from the committee meeting on the 7th September 2022, whereby the leadership structure for the Children and Families Directorate had been e-mailed on the 10th October 2022, but what sits under the new Assistant Directors' portfolios had still not been provided. Also, he had raised concerns at the 4th January 2023 committee meeting regarding the lack of information for the Children and Families Directorate Improvement Plan. The Cabinet Member agreed to chase this information, and this will be provided.

RESOLVED:

That the action tracker was noted and the Children and Families Directorate structure chart and the details of the Children and Families Directorate Improvement Plan to be provided.

6. SCHOOL ATTAINMENT AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

(See document No. 5)

Cllr. Karen McCarthy, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families, Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families, Kate Reynolds, AD, Lifelong Learning & Employability, Clare Nankivell, Data, Performance & Information Strategy Manager, Tim Boyes, Chief Executive, Birmingham Education Partnership (BEP), and Claire Williams, Consortia Partner, BEP, were in attendance for this item.

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the meeting and set the context for the discussion.

The presentation was given which included the data for the Key Stages, SEND pupils, disadvantaged pupils, and ethnicity. The Committee were informed that it will be brought to their attention if the provisional data changed significantly.

Tim Boyes highlighted that:

- The city had closed the attainment gap with the rest of the country.
- BEP amplified and shared the best practice of schools in the city.
- A BEP priority pre-Covid had been a focus on reading and there had been an improvement on reading scores, particularly in primary schools.
- BEP has a new seven year contract with the Council and their strategy is to put their focus into Key Stages 1 and 2, Key Stage 2 transition, curriculum development, high quality teaching, and writing.
- BEP has the Developing Local Provision (DLP) project to help groups of schools to support SEND pupils and address the concern regarding disadvantaged pupils.

During the discussion and in response to queries raised by Members, the main points included:

- The good news story was the work that had happened to strengthen the local groups of schools, which was a good by-product of Covid whereby schools worked closely together and this has resulted in BEP having a more detailed 'health map' of each of the consortia of schools which they support. More information on the school's consortia was requested and BEP will also provide examples of their thematic projects that have helped schools across the city.

- The bad news was that Covid has had a huge impact on schools and pupils, and pupils were doing worse as a result. This was a particular challenge for primary schools, and it was a national challenge, and they were trying to strengthen the school consortia and were hopeful that progress will be seen next year.
- Tim Boyes' initial thoughts were that the COVID 19 Catch Up Premium had not worked well and further information on this will be provided to the Committee.
- There was work being undertaken on the deprivation indices and the data being discussed at the committee meeting was for where pupils live rather than the schools they attend.
- Children who were entitled to Free School Meals (FSM) and classed as disadvantaged were doing better in the city than elsewhere in the country.
- The employee shortage was a big issue for schools and information on the recruitment and retention rates of teachers in the city in comparison to other areas will be provided.
- Good quality teachers and the principle of good inclusive practice was the answer to helping disadvantaged pupils. The Cabinet Member highlighted she has regular discussions with the Cabinet Member, Social Justice, Community Safety and Equalities on what more can be done to assist the Gypsy Roma community and the Chair thought it would be useful for the Committee to see how this has progressed when appropriate.
- The Developing Local Provision (DLP) has recently been signed off and will be shared with the Committee.
- Fiona Bottrill highlighted that there had been a resolution from the City Council meeting on the 1st November 2022 that called on O&S to incorporate ethnicity to Birmingham-specific strategies into their work programmes to track outcomes and monitor actions taken to address issues, ensuring they receive full analysis of achievement by socio-economic and ethnic background, and due to this item this motion has now been discharged.

RESOLVED:

That the update in relation to the draft Annual Education Performance Report – 2022 Examinations and Assessments was noted, and the following to be provided

- More information on the school's consortia and examples of BEP's thematic projects that have helped schools across the city.
- Further information on COVID 19 Catch Up Premium.
- The Developing Local Provision (DLP).
- The recruitment and retention rates of teachers in the city in comparison to other areas.

7. SCHOOL EXCLUSIONS, PART-TIME TIMETABLES, AND UNSUITABLE SCHOOL PLACES

(See document No. 6)

Cllr. Karen McCarthy, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Families, Sue Harrison, Strategic Director, Children and Families, and Razia Butt, Independent Education Adviser, were in attendance for this item.

The Chair welcomed the attendees to the meeting and set the context for the discussion.

Razia Butt gave the presentation and highlighted children missing education and out of sight, permanent exclusions – including children with SEND, suspensions – including children with SEND, part-time timetables, the Council's response, and children out of sight of services.

During the discussion and in response to queries raised by Members, the main points included:

- They were working on this with BEP, and it was a consortia led response to the issues. The work included looking at how schools responded to what they may deem as behavioural issues but the child has SEND, BEP was working on keeping children in school and they had the lead Ofsted inspector for inclusion at their recent event, the Council was commissioning special schools to do more outreach work with mainstream schools, and they were using the consortia to demonstrate best practice. Officers agreed to come back in six months with an update on the progress of the work undertaken.
- A lot of children had moved to Elective Home Education (EHE) because they had anxiety about returning to school following the pandemic.
- Cllr. Des Hughes was disappointed that the information provided did not answer the questions previously submitted several months ago and did not give meaningful information, with some of the information provided being up to five years out of date, and yet answers were given to a written question for City Council on 7th February 2023¹ that stated 196 children were in a mainstream school but awaiting a special school placement, and 159 children with an EHCP were without a school place.
- There was data that schools were statutorily required to provide, and they were working with schools, so they gave the correct data on part time timetables, and there was more work to be done on this.

RESOLVED:

That :

- The update was noted.

¹ Question C5

- Officers to come back in six months with an update on the progress of the work undertaken.
- The following information to be provided:
 - The total number of children currently permanently excluded and temporarily excluded.
 - The number of children with SEND currently excluded.
 - A breakdown of the figures for children suspended for less than five days and more than five days.
 - The current figures as the information showed that 3,000 pupils per 10,000 pupils had been suspended over the timeframe given and half of whom had an Education, Health, and Care plan (EHCP).
 - Children without a school place were referred to the Home Bridging Team and reassurance was requested that every child had a package of support and how many of these had a home tutor.
 - More information about the School Admissions (In-Year Admissions) team work to support children back into school, and the number of pupils in-year they support.
 - The part-time timetables and the ethnicity data only gives percentages, and the numbers were requested.
 - How long pupils have been on part-time timetables.
 - Whether those that were on part-time timetables have an unmet need (Part-time timetable: Reasons slide).
 - The number of children with an EHCP in a mainstream school who were awaiting a mainstream place.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

(See document No. 7)

The Chair informed Members that the BSCP item had been deferred to the April committee meeting due to their annual report not being ready and asked whether the Committee wanted to have a longer committee meeting to discuss the three items on the agenda or shorten the agenda. The Committee agreed to extend the Committee Meeting by 45 minutes.

The six month update on the progress of the work for the school exclusion, part-time timetables, and unsuitable school places item to be added to the work programme.

RESOLVED:

- That the work programme was agreed subject to being updated accordingly to reflect the discussions above.

9. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

Noted the next meeting was scheduled for 5 April 2023 at 1000 hours in Committee Rooms 3 & 4.

10. REQUEST(S) FOR CALL IN/COUNCILLOR CALL FOR ACTION/PETITIONS RECEIVED (IF ANY)

None.

11. OTHER URGENT BUSINESS

None.

12. AUTHORITY TO CHAIR AND OFFICERS

RESOLVED:

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 12.05 hours.