

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Thursday 17 November 2022 at 6.00 pm in The Telford Room, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford, TF3 4NT

Present: Councillors Lord Sahota (Chair), I T W Fletcher, A D McClements and B Wennington.
Co-optee: S Fikeis

Also Present: Councillor S A W Reynolds (Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, and Families).

In Attendance: S Wellman (Director: Education & Skills), R Phillips (Service Delivery Manager: Legal & Democracy), and S Yarnall (Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)).

Apologies: Councillors M Boylan, J Jones and K T Tomlinson.
Co-Optees: L Fowler and M Ward.

39 Declarations of Interest

None.

40 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 2022 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

41 Educational Attainment 2020 to 2022

The committee received a presentation from the Director: Education & Skills on Educational Attainment 2020-2022. It summarised the educational attainment statistics from all Key Stages from 2020 to 2022. Members noted that there were no statistics for the last two years due to the pause on statutory assessments as a result of COVID-19. Members heard that the statistics included maintained school and academies and that the statistics for attainment across the areas was broadly in line with the national figures. The Director: Education & Skills summarised areas of focus for improvement, including COVID-19 recovery and attainment especially for those from a disadvantaged background.

Members discussed the presentation and raised the following questions.

Members asked what classed a child as disadvantaged.

The classification for disadvantaged was based on whether a child received free school meals.

Members questioned what measures were in place to improve figures going forward.

The Director: Education & Skills explained that the senior school leader would target those schools which were outliers and focus on assisting them. Further partnership work with academy trusts was being undertaken to support with this.

Members asked about the impact of the pandemic on young people from disadvantaged backgrounds and if there were investments/plans to support these young people?

The Raising Attainment of Disadvantaged Youngsters (RADY) project would aim to address this and further work was taking place with schools and academies across the Borough to support disadvantaged children.

Members asked about the RADY project and its impact on working with academies.

Members were advised that there was a shared goal, with academies and the Council working in partnership, to support pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Members were concerned over children going hungry and its effects on concentration levels, and wondered if there were schemes in place to support with this.

Members were advised that there were schemes in place such as breakfast clubs and funding to provide food to children when necessary.

Members queried the disadvantaged cohort and levels of attainment.

Members were advised that nationally those children classed as disadvantaged do not perform as well as those not classed as disadvantaged.

A query was raised regarding pupils for whom English is a second language.

There were statistics on children with English as a second language but further work would be needed to collate them.

Members asked about the last examinations in 2018/2019 and queried how these compared to the recent data?

The 2020/21 results were higher than those in 2018/19, however, Members were advised that schools had been given more 'prompts' for the most recent cohort to support preparation for exams.

Members asked for information on 2022 attainment results.

It was explained that the data was not yet fully known but nationally there was a lower comparative statistic.

42 **10 By 10**

The Director: Education & Skills presented an update on '10 By 10' to the committee. The project aimed to give children in Telford and Wrekin the opportunity to have the best start in life through completing 10 activities by the age of 10. The first phase was the project development and launch of the project; where the second phase was further development which included external partnership working and further children being registered to the scheme.

Members raised the following questions.

Members asked if the activities available were only leisure based.

There were a wide variety of activities on offer such as debating and day trips, in addition to leisure-based activities.

Members asked about the funding of the activities.

Activities were funded by different organisations, for example sponsors from social value contracts. Balfour Beatty, a Council Contractor, has supported the instillation of banners across schools in the Borough.

Members recognised the initiative as being beneficial and asked about the participation from children from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Evidence of engagement with disadvantaged pupils would need to be further looked into with analysis over postcode uptake, however, children from all backgrounds had so far engaged with the project.

There was also further funding from pupil premium on offer to children and families who struggled with costs.

It was further stressed that the projects were designed to be inclusive and that there were summer activities that aimed to work with children on free school meals to aid with additional funding and food.

Members asked about how long the project would be for?

There is no current end date and the project would continue to be promoted.

Members asked about outcomes for the project.

The data would need to be examined to look at uptake for each activity and discussions would then take place with schools regarding areas for improvement.

Members asked how a business could be involved?

It was explained that engagement with the media and the website would provide the information for further involvement with the scheme and that there would be further opportunities after the launch for more businesses to become involved in supporting the project.

Members asked about feedback and further development once a child was older.

The feedback so far, showed that the project had been well received and that there were plans to expand the project with secondary school children to ensure continual development of the skills learnt. Engagement from secondary children age would be down to the individual child to continue the activities. Further planning was being done to expand the project and further announcements would be made in future.

Members noted the importance of getting families involved in the scheme.

Family engagement and involvement was important to get families to work together outside of the school environment.

Members asked for clarity on how to register onto the scheme.

Children would have received either a newsletter physically or electronically that explained the process. Children can register online and schools would be able to help if necessary.

Members thanked the Director: Education & Skills and Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, and Families for the presentation and recognised the impact that the 10 By 10 project had on children in the Borough.

43 Chair's Update

The Chair updated members on the upcoming meetings and advised that the next meeting was due to be held on 7 February 2023.

The meeting ended at 6.49 pm

Chairman:

Date: Tuesday 7 February 2023