



CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Wednesday 6 December 2023 at 6.00 pm in Third Floor, Southwater One, Southwater Square, Southwater Way, Telford, TF3 4JG

Present: Councillors J Jones (Chair), Z Hannington, A S Jhawar, L Parker, K Tonks, J Urey and O Vickers

Also Present: Councillors E M Callear (Cabinet Member: Education, Employment & Visitor Economy) and P Watling (Cabinet Member: Adult Social Care & Health Systems)

In Attendance: J Britton (Executive Director: Children's & Family Services), D Knibbs (Director: Children's Safeguarding & Family Support), S Wellman (Director: Education & Skills), R Carey (School Performance Team Leader), K Fisher (Lead Lawyer: Children & Adults), Paige Starkey (Senior Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)) and S Yarnall (Democracy Officer (Scrutiny)) and P Starkey (Senior Democracy Officer (Scrutiny))

CYP12 Declarations of Interest

None.

CYP13 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 4 October 2023 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CYP14 Educational Attainment

Members received a presentation from the School Performance Team Leader and the Director: Education & Skills on the 2022/23 Educational Attainment statistics of schools across the Borough. Members were informed that the data presented to them had been published nationally and marked a return to full primary school data since the COVID-19 Pandemic and a second year of full secondary school results data.

The presentation summarised the highlights for both results in primary age which included key stage 1 and key stage 2 as well as summarising the results for secondary school GCSE results.



For key stage 1 it was summarised that there had been a good level of development with phonics. Members were informed that reading, writing and maths were a statutory requirement and were to be taught in early year's education. The results in these areas were in line with the national average in schools across the Borough.

The statistics also highlighted the local authority were above the statistical average in comparison to national and regional neighbours and this was also seen amongst children classed as 'disadvantaged'. It was summarised that the results for year 1 pupils had increased and for those children that do not reach the required results, extra support would be available in year 2. In summary, the presentation highlighted that for key stage 1 the levels of attainment across pupils were broadly in line with the national figures and recognised that disadvantaged pupils on average were below national statistics.

Members were informed that the outcomes for both reading and maths for key stage 2 were based on SATs tests. The results presented to Members were sampled and moderated across schools in the Borough. The figures highlighted that there was a 61% combined statistic of children who had achieved greater than expected standard. This was summarised as a 2% increase to that of local and regional neighbours.

Members were informed that the definition for disadvantaged pupils was defined by whether or not a pupil was in receipt of free school meals and that the statistics for them in key stage 2 was just under 50% attainment. This was explained as being better than the national average, however, Members were assured that further work would take place to provide additional support.

The statistics presented for key stage 4 were a result of attainment across GCSE grades. Members were informed that the statistics for GCSEs were largely in line with the national average but were slightly lower than the figures from 2019 with disadvantaged pupils being lower than the average. Members were informed however that this was expected and reflected nationally as a result of the continued impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic. Following the move to the numbered grading system, 59% of pupils achieved a standard/strong pass in their GCSEs and 40% achieved a combined pass with their English and Maths. It was highlighted that more children had reached the benchmark in English.

The presentation concluded with the next steps and areas of focus going forward. Members were informed that further support would be available for those pupils that were struggling, especially with the use of the RADY project for year 2 students. There would also be further funding and support available for schools.



Following the presentation, Members posed a number of questions.

Was learning to write in cursive a requirement and was there evidence that it had an impact on children?

It was a requirement that by the end of primary school, children would be able to write joined up and that there were developments to phase cursive writing in schools.

What was being done to get parents and carers to work with schools to help with a child's learning?

There was ongoing work with parents and/or carers with support colleagues following COVID-19 to invite them into schools for activities such as interactive maths lessons.

How were schools monitored and how often would the team monitor a school's progress?

For maintained schools, there was a monitoring board across the service area that looked at both outcomes and safeguarding. The OFSTED inspections were utilised to aid with the monitoring of schools.

Were there community projects that were aimed for parents that were not engaging with schools?

There were interventions in place for parents and carers that were less engaging with schools such as the RADY project and there were other elements that schools utilised such as after school and sports clubs. With the Department for Education's focus on attendance there were opportunities in schools to engage with communities such as the opportunity to work with family hubs.

When examining attendance and attainment how did it compare to disadvantaged pupils and their results?

The attainment statistics looked at the overall figures. Work was being undertaken with the Department for Education to explore this further and enable academies in the Borough to forensically examine this to understand the impact of attendance and attainment in greater depth with factors including if a pupil was classed as disadvantaged.

CYP15 School Streets

The Director: Education & Skills presented the School Streets scheme to the Committee. The scheme resulted from a previous working group from the



Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee between March and September 2021. The working group conducted a number of evidence gathering workshops which consisted of testimonials from individual officers both in and from other local authorities. A number of examples were given as part of this scheme such as proposed road closures by schools during peak hours. However, there were a number of factors that were considered such as impacts on local residents and at the time the increased concern of the COVID-19 pandemic meant there were additional caution when approaching schools about being part of the scheme.

Following the initial working group, a report was produced that detailed the recommendations for the scheme or similar to be considered/implemented across schools in the Borough. Members heard that there were a number of other practical considerations when implementing a similar scheme.

Following the initial report being produced in 2021, Members were informed that the initial scheme had evolved and that officers were working towards an offer bespoke to Telford and Wrekin schools. The “A New Journey to School” was developed to offer schools a range of activities to encourage children to take up more active forms of travel to school. Members were informed of a few examples including bikeability classes and walking busses.

Members were asked to endorse this approach to school streets and recommend it as an alternative model. Members were informed that the pilot had seen interest from schools in the Borough. There were already a few schools interested in the scheme. In line with the working group recommendations, the scheme would look to launch the scheme by September 2024 and that further progress would be reported back to the committee.

Following the presentation, Members posed the following questions.

Do you work with Town and Parishes to address some of the issues such as enforcement, funding and lack of volunteers for certain activities like walking busses?

Members were informed that there had been work with Town and Parish Council's to support the scheme and encourage take up amongst the communities and urged Members to support this further.

If a school were to be involved, do they have to choose certain activities from the scheme?

A school would be able to choose which activity they would like to use as part of the scheme.



How were elements of safety such as DBS checks accounted for with activities like walking busses?

The schools would work with the road safety team to support this and to put the infrastructure into practice regarding safety checks.

Were there further comms with parents/guardians to encourage uptake with the scheme?

There would be further comms about the scheme following the formal launch to show parents/carers the benefits of the scheme on both wellbeing and the environmental impacts.

Would you work with interested schools to help develop the scheme such as Donnington Wood Junior School who were interested in being involved?

The Director: Education & Skills informed Members that Donnington Wood Junior School were one of the schools that would be involved with the pilot. The importance of the pilot was stressed as an opportunity to learn what would work and then to implement a consistent approach across schools in the Borough.

Following comments and questions from Members, it was proposed that Members supported the scheme and for it be supported by Cabinet and that the pilot would be adopted.

RESOLVED – that the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet that the A New Journey to School scheme be implemented across schools in the Borough.

CYP16 Care Leaver Offer

The Director: Children's Safeguarding & Family Support presented the Care Leaver Offer to the Committee. The presentation summarised the definition of a Care Leaver as a young person that had experience being in care. The Care Leaver Offer was summarised as a tangible offer that ensured an impactful outcome to support young people that have left care.

The offer provided a range of support for young people such as teaching life skills, interview techniques and provided advice when needed. The offer was summarised as being a bespoke package for young people with the objective of providing skills and support to young people for a prosperous future.

Members were informed that under the Children and Social Work Act 2017 it was the duty of local authorities to provide a Care Leaver Offer. It was summarised that this was a statutory level of support that prepared care



leavers for independent living and adulthood. The offer was available for those that were in care in some form for at least 13 weeks between the ages of 14 and 16 or were in care for 16 weeks after their 16th birthday and this differed slightly for those young people with a disability.

Some of the highlights of Telford & Wrekin Council's Care Leaver Offer were discussed. This included active participated to support care leavers to be an active members of society. It was also highlighted that along with physical support there was both emotional and mental support as part of the offer. There were also creative arts events that supported young people. At the end of the programme there were celebration events to celebrate the care leavers and the skills they had learnt. Members were informed that at the time of the meeting marked the 10 year anniversary of the Care Leaver Offer.

The most recent offer was published in April 2023 and the offer would be reviewed on an annual basis. Members were informed that system partners such as NHS colleagues supported the offer to provide additional support to Care Leavers. Members were informed that there was a bespoke Care Leaver lounge where young people could access 1-to-1 support as well as group support in a dedicated safe space. The local offer also provided council tax exemption for care leavers with additional support such as budgeting.

In terms of regulation, Members were informed that officers would work with OFSTED as part of regulating the offer. This helped to benchmark and inspect whether the offer was being fulfilled to its intended purpose.

Following the presentation, Members posed a few questions.

What support was available for young people once they reached the age of 25?

Recent legislation nationally had expanded the offer to support young people aged 21 to 25. However, once a young person was older than 25 it became increasingly difficult to support. The aim of the offer was to provide the best start possible and so once they were beyond the age of 25, they had the skills to be independent.

Was there support and/or grants from the government to support funding of the offer?

Grant funding was available from the government and it was used to explore the social value of funding to maximise the best level of support possible.

What would you say was the key aspect to ensure that the offer was successful?



Members were informed that consistency was the key element and it was a commitment of the offer. It was highlighted that there were financial issues that had to be considered and each local authority had different pressures.

What was the percentage of care leavers that accessed the offer?

The percentage of care leavers that accessed the offer was one that was hard to determine. The reason provided was that with the varied level of support offered and the bespoke nature of the offer, a young person can use as much and as little as they desired to suit their needs at that moment in time.

How did the offer compare to regional neighbours?

At the time of the meeting, Members were informed that there was current sharing amongst regional neighbours to explore how the offer compares. The Executive Director: Children & Family Services informed Members that they were the chair of the regional board and they fed issues and concerns back to support with the further development of the offer. Members were advised that they would be informed of further information when available.

Members discussed the possibility of visiting the leavers lounge in their role as corporate parents, upon putting to a vote it was unanimous that the option of a visit be explored.

RESOLVED – that a site visit to the Care Leavers Lounge to observe the local care leaver offer in practice for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee be arranged.

CYP17 Work Programme

The Democracy Officer (Scrutiny) presented the updated work programme to the Committee. Members were informed that there were no substantial changes following the last Committee meeting and that any further updates would be presented back to the Committee.

CYP18 Chair's Update

The Chair informed the Committee that the next scheduled meeting would take place on 21 February 2024 and that once the visit to the Care Leaver Lounge had been arranged that they would be notified of the date.

The meeting ended at 7.38 pm

Chairman:

Date: Wednesday 21 February 2024