

## NOTTINGHAM CITY COUNCIL

### CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES of the meeting held at Ground Floor Committee Room - Loxley House, Station Street, Nottingham, NG2 3NG on 18 September 2018 from 11.00 am - 12.47 pm**

#### **Membership**

##### Present

Councillor Glyn Jenkins  
Councillor Jim Armstrong  
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora (Item 19 Onwards)  
Councillor Brian Parbutt  
Councillor Chris Tansley

##### Absent

Councillor Azad Choudhry  
Councillor Mohammed Ibrahim  
Councillor Sue Johnson  
Councillor Georgia Power

#### **Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:**

Councillor Neghat Khan - Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills  
Councillor David Mellen - Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years  
Julia Bramble - Service Manager for Early Help Services  
Jane Garrard - Constitutional Services  
Kate Morris - Governance Officer

#### **16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Councillor Sue Johnson – Personal  
Councillor Georgia Power – Other Council Business

In the absence of Councillor Sue Johnson, Chair, Councillor Glyn Jenkins, Vice Chair chaired the meeting.

#### **17 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

Chris Tansley declared an interest in discussions around the Nottingham School's Trust as a Director of the Trust. Although no one item centred on the Trust it was raised in discussion.

#### **18 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 July 2018 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

#### **19 SCRUTINY OF PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR EDUCATION AND SKILLS**

Councillor Neghat Khan, Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills gave a presentation to the Committee regarding progress of Council Plan objectives relevant to her Portfolio and future plans for the Portfolio. She highlighted the following points within each Council Plan priority:

- (a) Ensure every child in Nottingham is taught in a school judged good or outstanding by Ofsted:

- 87% of pupils attend schools judged as good or outstanding by Ofsted, which is 2% above the national rate of 85% and 5% higher than statistical neighbours.
  - Local Authority maintained schools in the Requiring Improvement category are being allocated additional targeted School Improvement Advisor support.
  - Nottingham City Council continues to liaise with the Regional Schools Commissioner for East Midlands and Humber and with the County Council Cabinet member for Education around schools in the County attended by City students;
- (b) Guarantee a preference for places for every child at a local primary school:
- 96% of pupils obtaining a place at their first or second preference primary school in 2018.
  - There are challenges surrounding access to a first preference primary school through the 'in-year' admissions process, as well as there being pressure in upper year primary places due to a large influx of new arrivals to the City.
  - The primary expansion plan has delivered around 5000 new places since 2010 and the expansions at Glade Hill and Middleton will create over 400 more places combined;
- (c) Reduce absence from school by a quarter:
- School absence rate at the end of the 2017/18 academic year was 4.5%, which is 0.2% higher than the national average.
  - Work to reduce this figure includes the Every Day Counts initiative, truancy patrols, the Check and Challenge hotline and the recommencement of fines following the outcome of the Isle of Wight case. The Lord Mayors Attendance Awards for primary school children continues to be rolled out and expanded.
  - The Local Authority is working towards accessing live attendance data from all schools to enable effective target setting and early intervention strategies;
- (d) Increase the number of young people getting good GCSEs in English and Maths to be above the national average:
- This remains challenging with Nottingham ranked 144 out of 149 Local Authorities.
  - Results from 2017 and 2018 are not directly comparable given changes in grading systems, however the unvalidated results from 2018 suggest a significant gap from the national average.
  - In order to reduce the gap, the work of the Education Improvement Board is on-going, with funding of £1.2 million being allocated to ensure that this continues.
  - A teacher support and mentoring programme is in the early stages of development and learning from a school in Stoke on Trent ranked in the top 25% is being pursued.
  - Work will continue around the Key Stage 2-Key Stage 3 transition and recruitment and retention of high quality teachers remains a focus;

- (e) School exclusion rates were briefly discussed but the Chair proposed to examine the issues in detail in the next agenda item which was specifically focused on school exclusions;
- (f) Place within mainstream schools for pupils with special educational needs (SEN) remains a challenge. SEN pupils continue to be overrepresented in exclusion figures leading to a strain on alternative provision and special school places;
- (g) There are now 526 places available at special schools, this has increased following expansion at Westbury Special School;

Following questions and comments from the Committee the following further information was given:

- (h) Work is taking place with parents who choose to home school their children. There are concerns that some schools are advising parents to take their children out of school instead of having them excluded. This concerning practice is being very closely monitored by the local authority and any issues relating to academies will be fed back to the Regional Schools Commissioner;
- (i) Schools involved in the expansion programme have all maintained their 30 pupil class size limit for Key Stage 1. Funding for these schools has been maintained proportionally.

**RESOLVED to review the results for the percentage of pupils who achieved a strong pass (9-5) in English and Maths once the results have been validated.**

## **20 SOCIAL EXCLUSIONS**

Councillor Neghat Khan, Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills, along with Nick Lee, Head of Access and Inclusion introduced the report on school exclusions. They gave a presentation outlining work taking place to try and reduce the level of permanent exclusions from schools within the City, and highlighted the following points:

- (a) The permanent exclusion rate at the end of the 2017/18 academic year was 97, which is an improvement from the rate at the end of the 2016/17 academic year of 121. Although this is a reduction of 24 permanent exclusions, the rate is still higher than the national average. The forecasted permanent exclusion rate for the end of the 2018/19 academic year is 82;
- (b) At secondary level the main driver for exclusion is persistent disruptive behaviour, and at primary level the main driver for exclusion is physical assault on staff;
- (c) A new Low Exclusion Model and Service Level Agreement, a model for secondary school academies to commit to reducing their permanent exclusion numbers, has been agreed and adopted by ten of the City's seventeen

academies. Dialogue will continue with the seven academies that have not agreed and adopted the model to encourage wider engagement.

- (d) Routes 2 Inclusion, a model of early identification for primary age pupils at risk of future exclusion is being launched this term in the hope that it will promote a long-term reduction in exclusions;
- (e) Development of the Priority Families model of identifying the wider domestic challenges that children may be facing in their family life, which then translates into behaviour issues at school, is currently underway at both primary and secondary level;
- (f) A programme of support is available for parents to guide them through the exclusion process and provide advice around their right to challenge a school's decision to exclude;
- (g) The programme of initiatives aimed at reducing exclusions, including the Low Exclusion Model, Routes 2 Inclusion and Priority Families model could be the reason why permanent school exclusions have fallen over the last year.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that that there needs to be continued engagement with the seven schools that have not agreed to and adopted the new Low Exclusion Model to encourage wider engagement and ensure that all schools are committed to reducing permanent exclusion rates in the City. The Committee will continue to review progress in reducing permanent exclusion rates including through speaking to the Regional Schools Commissioner, speaking with academies not currently involved with local initiatives, and reviewing Council progress on developing the Low Exclusion Model and other initiatives.

**RESOLVED to review progress in reducing permanent exclusions from City schools by:**

- i) speaking to the Regional Schools Commissioner, scheduled to attend the Committee's meeting in January, about his role in relation to school exclusions and accountability for school exclusions by academies;**
- ii) speaking to academies, including the Creative Education Trust which runs Bulwell Academy, which is scheduled to attend the Committee's meeting in January, about their engagement with the Low Exclusion Model and other initiatives aimed at reducing permanent exclusions; and**
- iii) reviewing levels of permanent exclusions and overall progress with the various initiatives aimed at reducing permanent exclusions in one year's time.**

## 21 'HOLIDAY HUNGER'

Councillor David Mellen, Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years and Julia Bramble, Service Manager for Early Help Services gave a verbal update to the Committee on the issue of 'holiday hunger'. They gave an outline of the work that took place in the City during summer 2018 to highlight and start to address the issue. The following points were highlighted:

- (a) In 2017 an All-Party Parliament Group reported that during the school summer holidays up to 3 million children were going hungry as a result of the loss of free school meals. 2 million of these children were in families where one or both parents worked. The loss of these free school meals add up to £30-£40 a week to parents' financial outgoings;
- (b) During the 2018 summer holidays, a number of different groups within the City, along with a number of volunteers worked together to enable the provision of well over 2000 lunches to young people in the City;
- (c) Lunch provision was primarily delivered through existing programmes such as Small Steps Big Changes and existing holiday activity provision;
- (d) The cost of the lunch provision was relatively low but did require some initial investment, for example to purchase fridges and cool boxes. The initiative also relied heavily on volunteers and Council colleagues managing the programme in addition to their normal duties;
- (e) A full report is currently being compiled to assess the effectiveness of the work that took place; identify lessons to be learnt; and to look at the feasibility of rolling out a scaled up version during summer 2019;

Following questions and comments the following points were highlighted:

- (f) There are a number of programmes run across the City to help educate parents around nutrition and how to prepare cheap nutritious food from scratch;
- (g) There is work to do to engage the private sector and gain sponsorship from organisations to help fund any future programme;
- (h) One of the issues is how to appropriately target those children and families in most need.

### **RESOLVED to:**

- (1) welcome the work taking place to address 'holiday hunger' in the City;**
- (2) review the full evaluation of activity during summer 2018 and plans for summer 2019 at the March meeting of the Committee; and**

- (3) recommend that ways of engaging all councillors in identifying and co-ordinating local volunteers to support the initiative in the future be explored.**

**22 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

Jane Garrard, Senior Governance Officer introduced the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's work programme for 2018/19.

**RESOLVED to:**

- (1) note the content of the work programme for the remainder of 2018/19;**
- (2) include 'holiday hunger' on the work programme for the March meeting of the Committee; and**
- (3) consider scheduling an item about changes to adoption.**