

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 19 March 2019 from 11.00 am - 12.42 pm

Membership

Present

Councillor Glyn Jenkins (Chair)
Councillor Jim Armstrong
Councillor Patience Uloma Ifediora
Councillor Brian Parbutt
Councillor Georgia Power

Absent

Councillor Sue Johnson
Councillor Azad Choudhry
Councillor Chris Tansley

Colleagues, partners and others in attendance:

Julia Bramble	- Service Manager for Early Help Services
Phillip Cantwell	- Director of Education, Creative Education Trust
John Dexter	- Education Director
John Edwards	- Regional Schools Commissioner, East Midlands
James Lavender	- Governance Officer
Nick Lee	- Director of Education Services
Peter McConnichie	- Head of Access to Learning
Councillor David Mellen	- Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years
Alison Michalska	- Corporate Director for Children and Adults
Michelle Strong	- Principle, Bulwell Academy
Zena West	- Senior Governance Officer

36 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor Sue Johnson
Councillor Chris Tansley

In the absence of Councillor Sue Johnson, the meeting was chaired by Councillor Glyn Jenkins.

37 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

38 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2019 were confirmed as a true record and were signed by the Chair.

39 REGIONAL SCHOOLS COMMISSIONER

John Edwards, the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) for the East Midlands and the Humber, introduced a report on his role in contributing towards achieving the City's ambitions for having all schools rated as 'good' or 'outstanding'.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) the RSC works in schools and academies across 17 Local Authorities in the East Midlands;
- (b) RSCs are senior Civil Service positions which were introduced to ensure appropriate oversight of academies in the UK;
- (c) they work with academies and free schools that are underperforming and aim to pair them with a successful Multi-Academy Trust (MAT);
- (d) they take decisions on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education regarding underperforming schools and academies, but only when a school or academy has received an inadequate Ofsted report;
- (e) each commissioner is supported by a Headteacher Board made up of headteachers and sector leader (4 elected and 3 appointed) who advise them on decisions taken on behalf of the Secretary of State;
- (f) RSCs work with various education partners, such as Local Authorities, Dioceses and Ofsted;
- (g) there are around 1300 academies in the East Midlands and the Humber. Approximately 950 of them voluntarily converted to academies or started as academies, and approximately 350 were brought into the structures. 48% of schools in the East Midlands are academies now. A third of these academies are rated 'good' or 'outstanding' in the East Midlands;
- (h) 92.5% of converted academies are rated 'good' or 'outstanding'. 58% of the sponsored academies are 'good' or 'outstanding'. There are 4 single academy trusts in the city (2 primaries, 1 secondary and 1 alternative provision);
- (i) some trusts have a wide spread across Nottinghamshire, Derbyshire and Lincolnshire;
- (j) the RSC for the East Midlands is currently supporting academies and schools with the open consultation on Ofsted education inspection framework, with particular focus being on the curriculum and educational experience;
- (k) RSCs work closely with the Education Funds Agency, who work with trusts to secure their finances and make sure their governance is secure. They also support the development of favourable learning and teaching environments;
- (l) RSCs also support the Early Career Framework which promotes teacher training and long-term careers in education;
- (m) they also encourage and support best practice in MATs.

The Committee's questions were responded to as follows:

- (n) permanent exclusions have been a significant concern for schools in Nottingham, but they declined slightly in 2016/17 (the data for 2017/18 is not available yet). There are concerns on the impact of permanent exclusions on wider education services;
- (o) there is support for headteachers from the government to exclude pupils if warranted, although headteachers have various legal requirements to meet before they can proceed with an exclusion;
- (p) former Children's Minister and MP Edward Timpson has been hired by the government to review how schools use exclusions, what kind of children get excluded and find best practice for reducing exclusions;
- (q) spikes in exclusions come from new exclusion policies. Data gathered on exclusions has shown that as schools reach into difficult times; exclusions go up. When improvements begin; exclusions peak, then decline;
- (r) the characteristics identified in addressing underperformance in schools and academies are as follows;
 - outstanding leadership;
 - clear expectations and freedom for principals to make key decisions;
 - staff retention;
 - a clear vision for the school/academy/MAT;
 - affordable curriculum;
 - behaviour expectations;
 - leadership dedication and drive;
 - working with local community partners.
- (s) the main mechanism used by the Department of Education and Local Authorities for creating new schools is the Free School Presumption Route. Each local authority receives basic need funding for identifying an area in need of a new school, and then a MAT or another sponsor builds the school. NCC weren't successful in previous applications for building new schools. They have made land available, but there isn't the money in the Council's budget to build new schools.

RESOLVED to thank the Regional Schools' Commissioner for the East Midlands and the Humber for presenting his report, and to note the information.

40 CREATIVE EDUCATION TRUST (BULWELL ACADEMY AND ELLIS GUILFORD)

Phillip Cantwell, Director of Education at the Creative Education Trust, and Michelle Strong, Principal of Bulwell Academy, updated the Committee on the progress and improvement journeys of Bulwell Academy and Ellis Guilford.

The following points were noted:

- (a) since the Creative Education Trust was founded in 2011, there has been slow but steady growth from the 2 founding academies to 17 academies in 2019;
- (b) most schools in the Trust are secondary schools, with many taken on board by the Trust when they were given Grade 4 (Inadequate) ratings by Ofsted;
- (c) the Trust has schools in Coventry, Great Yarmouth, Milton Keynes, Northamptonshire, Nottingham, Rugeley, Stoke-On-Trent and Tamworth;
- (d) Bulwell Academy was taken on board by CET in 2018, when it was Grade 2 (Good). Improvements have since taken place, but there has been uneven progress;
- (e) Michelle Strong was hired as Principal of Bulwell Academy after her impressive work at Caister Academy in Great Yarmouth, where she took the school from a Grade 4 to a Grade 2 Ofsted ranking in the space of two years;
- (f) when the Trust took on Bulwell Academy, they found deep seated underachievement, poor attendance, poor behaviour, safeguarding issues and mental health/wellbeing concerns;
- (g) the Trust has addressed these problems by improving the curriculum, the quality of teaching and learning, introducing new lessons times, promoting the importance of education and aspiration and undergoing three restructures in management, teaching and support staff; all the while making an effort to keep the improvement of children's education ongoing.

The Committee's questions were responded to as follows:

- (h) the Trust has only taken on existing schools as they don't have the time or resources to build new schools;
- (i) the Trust takes the view that inclusivity in schools is achieved by excellent academic standards.

RESOLVED to thank the Director of Education at the Creative Education Trust and the Principal of Bulwell Academy for their update and to note the contents.

41 SCHOOL PLACE PLANNING

Nick Lee, Director of Education Services at Nottingham City Council, delivered a presentation on the Council's progress in ensuring the supply of sufficient school places for secondary education.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) £40 million was made available for additional school places because of a significant increase in demand since September 2010;

- (b) extra capacity has been negotiated with 5 city academies;
- (c) there is still capacity at 3 city schools; Nottingham Academy, Djanogly City Academy and Farnborough Academy. Late applicants still need to be placed;
- (d) 8 new forms of entry are still required to meet increased secondary growth with Year 7 demand peaking in 2022;
- (e) additional demand can arise from increased pressure on county schools and the number of new housing developments within the city;
- (f) ensuring that the supply of school places meets demand remains a statutory duty of Local Authorities as per the Education Act 1996, even though they are no longer able to open new schools;
- (g) there is a need to promote parental choice with access to good and excellent schools close to their homes;
- (h) the Council needs to increase capacity to popular and successful schools, primarily through support to schools with developing proposals, funding bids, free school applications and consultation/stakeholder management;
- (i) the goal is to increase the percentage of first and second preferences which has decreased from 92% in 2018 to 86% in 2019. Although, the actual number of first preference offers has remained consistent with last year, due to the additional capacity negotiated in collaboration with academies;
- (j) there is the challenging context of a fragmented education system, especially with relying on direct bids from MATS to deliver the required capacity;
- (k) there is insufficient Capital/Basic Need Grant for the Council to deliver all the required secondary capacity;
- (l) the Free School Presumption route is dependent on availability of sites and sufficient Basic Need funding to build a new school, which the Council doesn't currently have;
- (m) the demand for high quality and diverse provision is growing in areas of need;
- (n) there is a lack of available sites for new schools and existing schools are often unable to expand due to constrained sites;
- (o) children of all school ages continue to move in to Nottingham, with an increasing number of multi-sibling families;
- (p) 11 new forms of entry have been negotiated with Nottingham Emmanuel School, Nottingham Girls Academy and Nottingham Free School, for September 2019, adding a further 62 places.

The Committee's questions were responded to as follows:

- (q) the Council is trying to acquire a site in Nottingham for use in the Free School Presumption route;
- (r) more needs to be done to identify areas which need prioritising to ensure that parents don't send their children to schools outside of their locality, for example, parents in Bestwood sending their children to be educated in Arnold;
- (s) the Archway Learning Trust has submitted a direct bid to the Department of Education for acquiring provisions for more places.

RESOLVED to thank the Director of Education Services for delivering his presentation to the Committee, and to note its contents.

42 HOLIDAY HUNGER

Councillor David Mellen, Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years, and Julia Bramble, Service Manager for Early Help Services at Nottingham City Council, updated the Committee on the work they are involved with in trying to tackle 'holiday hunger' ahead of summer 2019.

The following points were highlighted:

- (a) over a long summer holiday, families who would otherwise use breakfast clubs and qualify for free school meals lose these vital services;
- (b) with working parents spending more money on childcare over the summer holidays, finances can be stretched and some parents may go without food to feed their children, and/or provide cheap, but not nutritious, food;
- (c) in 2018, Nottingham City Council gathered together organisations for a Fairshare pilot scheme to buy up food from supermarkets and make packed lunches for families to eat over the summer. Over 3 weeks, 2160 packed lunches were made. School catering staff volunteered their services to make the lunches and were joined by volunteers across Nottingham to deliver these lunches to families in need of them;
- (d) Dovecote Primary School in Clifton provided a hot lunch for 133 people on a family fun day in August;
- (e) mosques and gurdwara's often provide food throughout the holidays for those struggling with holiday hunger well;
- (f) £2 million was provided by the Government for the Holiday Activities and Food programme;
- (g) Streetgames approached the Council to put a consortium bid in to develop a Summer Programme for 2019. £9 million for 9 regions is available from the Department for Education. Nottingham City Catering services are included as well as national and local volunteer organisations. After putting in the bid, the funding allocations will be announced in the last week of March;

- (h) if successful, the size of the project will be much larger than in 2018. It will include youth sites, leisure centres, community centres and public parks. There will also be training considerations for catering.

The Committee's questions were responded to as follows:

- (i) £3,263.95 was spend on the Fairshare pilot, with the biggest costs being one-off expenses such as purchasing fridges;
- (j) government and independent reports detail holiday hunger from the testimonies of teaching staff and pupils across the UK;
- (k) the Council aims to get £1 million of the £9 million available from the Department for Education, but if the Council's bid is unsuccessful, a smaller volunteer-run project will be delivered in 2019 instead.

RESOLVED to thank the Portfolio Holder for Early Intervention and Early Years and the Service Manager for Early Help Services for their update, and to note the contents.

43 WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

Zena West, Senior Governance Officer, presented a number of items suitable for consideration during the 2019-20 municipal year at Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee, including:

- Early Years and Childcare Funding;
- Independent Inquiry into child sexual exploitation;
- Special Education Needs and Disabilities;
- The Timpson Report into school exclusions;
- OFSTED inspection for Children's Services;
- Access to Further Education;
- Adoption Services.

RESOLVED to:

- (1) consider the following items at the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee for June:**
- **Review of the Regional Adoption Agency;**
 - **OFSTED inspection of Children's Services;**
- (2) consider the following items at the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee for July:**
- **Take up of entitlement to early years childcare funding;**
 - **School Exclusions (including Timpson review).**