

**CHILDREN'S AND CULTURE SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

MEETING, 23RD NOVEMBER, 2016

Present – Councillors Dean (Chairman), Abdullah, Darvesh, Gibbon, Harkin, Haworth, Hornby, Iqbal, Murray, Spencer, Mrs. Swarbrick, C. Wild and Wilkinson.

Co-opted Members

Mr J. Clare – Representative of Secondary Parent Governors
Mrs A. Martin – Representative of Primary Parent Governors

Also in Attendance

Councillor Cunliffe	-	Cabinet Member for Education, Schools, Safeguarding and Looked After Children
Councillor J. Byrne	-	Cabinet Member for Culture, Youth and Sport
Mr. J. Daly	-	Director of People
Mr T. Birch	-	Assistant Director, Education and Learning
Mr J. Gorton	-	Partnership Manager, Leisure Trust
Mr D. Singleton	-	Chair, Bolton Community Leisure Trust
Mr P. Hart	-	Head Teacher, Westhoughton High School
Mr T. Purcell	-	Chair, Bolton Supporting School Improvement Group
Mr G. Kell	-	Capital Programme Manager, Children's Services
Ms S. Schofield		Assistant Director, Department of Place

Ms D. Ball	Assistant Director of Place
Ms S. Gatenby	Assistant Director of People
Mrs S. Bailey	- Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Jones, Gillies, Kirk-Robinson (Vice-Chairman) and Mrs Thomas.

Councillor Dean in the Chair.

16. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting of the Children's and Culture Scrutiny Committee held on 5th October, 2016 were submitted.

Resolved – That the minutes be received and signed as a correct record.

17. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which put forward the proposed Work Programme for the Committee for the current Municipal Year, which had been formulated following the workshop session at the first meeting of the Committee in June.

Resolved – That the 2016/17 work programme, as now submitted, be approved.

18. SCHOOL ADMISSIONS, PLACE PLANNING AND ACADEMIES DEVELOPMENT

Mr T. Birch gave a presentation which focused on pupil growth and pressures in Bolton for the period 2008 – 2025.

The report outlined:

- growth in primary school numbers;
- primary school operating capacities;
- secondary school pupil projections;

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- secondary school minimum expansion requirements; and
- other pupil pressures.

With regard to primary schools, the presentation highlighted in particular:

- over 4,000 reception pupils admitted in September, 2016;
- 750 more than admitted in September, 2008;
- over 200 permanent and temporary reception places created for additional pupils in September, 2016;
- 86% of 1st preference offers made;
- 96% of all preference offers made; and
- in-year pressure on places in particular year groups was highlighted.

With regard to secondary school places, the presentation referred in particular to:

- total Year 7 capacity would be exceeded by September 2018, but the 'effective' capacity would be exceeded by September 2017;
- total secondary place capacity would be exceeded by September 2020, but 'effective' capacity was expected to be exceeded by September 2019; and
- minimum expansion requirements equated to 2,500 additional year 7 secondary school places.

With regard to expansion, members were advised of various factors which would influence where the additional places would be allocated. These included geographical, practicalities, need, cost and location. It was noted that there could be the possibilities to rationalise the planned admission numbers at various schools.

Following the presentations, members made the following comments/observations:

- the increasing numbers of free schools within the Borough led to different challenges for the LEA when coordinating admissions and projecting pupil numbers. Free Schools were initially exempt from the LEA Co-ordinated Admissions Process and it was more difficult to make projections on pupil numbers. Mr Birch explained that in Bolton, free schools worked closely with the LEA to manage admissions;
- how increased demands were affecting special needs in schools – Mr Birch reported that there was much ongoing positive work regarding the development and expansion of special needs in schools;
- the impact of international new arrivals in the Borough – Bolton schools had managed this process effectively with children progressing well.

Resolved – That Mr Birch be thanked for his informative presentation.

19. BOLTON LEARNING ALLIANCE

Mr T. Purcell gave a presentation on the role and function of the Bolton Learning Alliance and its progress and development.

The Bolton Learning Alliance (BLA) and its predecessor BASH had been established in order to promote joined up working across all schools and academies in the Borough with a view to supporting school improvement.

The presentation outlined the main objectives of the Alliance, namely:

- to foster a sense of common moral purpose among all schools and local authority leaders for securing and maintaining standards across the Authority as well as for standards in schools;
- to promote the personal growth and development of all young people (19,000 learners) in secondary schools to empower them to become highly effective and happy consumers, producers and citizens;
- to develop capacity as self-improving schools; and

- to achieve the position, through a common endeavour, where all Bolton's secondary schools were judged to be good or better and where a significant number were judged as outstanding.

With regard to the future development, members were advised of the establish a Bolton Secondary Learning Partnership for Bolton's secondary schools with the aim of raising standards for all students in all secondary schools and which would support school improvement work in Bolton.

Details were also provided in terms of:

- the structure of the Partnership;
- the role of the Supporting School Improvement Board;
- the development plan and future initiatives; and
- resources and monitoring.

A copy of the Bolton Alliance Working Protocols was circulated at the meeting for information.

Following the presentation, members made the following comments/observations:

- the potential to involve parents on the Learning Partnership in the future;
- the difficulties in recruiting staff in schools nationally;
- mentoring and coaching of junior members of staff to encourage their progression up to senior positions;
- the BLA helped head teachers to challenge each other and created a positive constructive environment in which to discuss issues; and
- most schools within Bolton were involved in the BLA although some did not have the capacity or leadership to fully engage at the present time.

Resolved – That Mr Purcell be thanked for his informative presentation.

20. BOLTON COMMUNITY LEISURE TRUST

Mr D. Singleton gave a presentation on the Bolton Community Leisure Trust and its ongoing development.

Mr Singleton advised that over the past few years, the Trust had undergone a process of rationalisation and change. Investment in excess of £2,500,000 had resulted in the number of facilities being reduced to 5 from 13 with provision at Horwich, Farnworth, Leverhulme, Bolton One and Westhoughton. Consequently, both participation and retention rates had increased due to the better quality of services provided.

Members were also advised of:

- the governance arrangements of the Trust;
- the challenges of reduced resources and associated savings and efficiencies;
- increasing usage figures and retention rates; and
- future challenges.

The contract with the current provider was due to expire in March, 2019.

The presentation went on to focus on the new Horwich Health and Wellbeing Hub which was being built on the site of the old Horwich Leisure Centre and Mr Gorton outlined the progress of the building works to date.

The existing building had now been demolished and much of the ground work had been completed. Photographs showing the various stages of development were provided to members. The outline structure was expected to be in place by the end of the year with an anticipated completion date of September, 2017.

It was also reported that local business had been used as much as possible for the new build and that the local community were being involved in all stages of the development.

Resolved – That Mr Singleton and Mr Gorton be thanked for their informative presentation.

21. ACCESS TO SPORTS FACILITIES

Mr J. Gorton gave a presentation on access to sports facilities within Bolton.

The presentation referred to the numbers of sports halls, swimming pools and health and fitness facilities across the Borough together with their locations, availability, costs and usage.

In terms of facilities across the Borough, it was acknowledged that there was an area in the East where provision was lacking however, there were plans in place to share membership facilities between adjoining wards.

Resolved – That Mr Gorton be thanked for his informative presentation.

22. MEMBERS' BUSINESS

The Committee received the extracts of minutes of other meetings of the Council relevant to the remit of this Committee:-

- the Executive Cabinet Deputy Leader's Portfolio held on 10th October and 7th November, 2016.

Resolved – That the minutes of the various meetings be noted.

(The meeting started at 5.00pm and finished at 6.20pm)

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NOTES