

**CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE**

MEETING, 6TH FEBRUARY, 2019

Present – Councillors Shaikh (Chairman), Murray (Vice-Chairman), Ayub, Dean, Flitcroft, Gibbon, Irving, Kirk-Robinson, McKeon (as deputy for Councillor Gillies), Morris, Parkinson, Swarbrick and Warren.

Also in attendance

Councillor Cunliffe	- Executive Cabinet Member – Children
Ms B. Brown	- Interim Director of People
Mr T. Birch	- Assistant Director of People – Education and Learning
Ms S. Alexander	- Interim Assistant Director – Staying Safe
Ms L. Butcher	- Head of Finance
Mr G. Kelly	- Capital Programme Manager
Ms J. Robinson	- Start Well – Strategic Lead
Mr P. Hart	- Headteacher – Westhoughton High School
Ms A. Jackson	- Head of Inclusion
Mrs. S. Bailey	- Principal Democratic Services Officer

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bagnall, Gillies and C. Wild.

Councillor Shaikh in the Chair.

27. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved - The minutes of the proceedings of the meeting of the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee held on 5th December, 2018 were submitted and signed as a correct record.

28. THE COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Borough Solicitor submitted a report which put forward the Work Programme for the Committee for the current Municipal Year which had been formulated following the workshop session that had taken place at the meeting in June, 2018.

Resolved – That the 2018/19 work programme, as now submitted, be approved.

29. PUPIL PLACES PLANNING

Mr G. Kelly gave a presentation on pupil growth in Bolton and the subsequent impact on demand for secondary and primary school places as at December, 2018.

By way of background information, the presentation provided statistical information regarding the increase in pupil numbers and outlined the measures that were being put in place to address this growth.

With regard to Primary School places, current pressures indicated that there was limited available capacity in Key Stage 1 and that Key Stage 2 was effectively full, with many school cohorts operating above their Planned Admission Numbers where infant class size limits did not apply.

With regard to projected intakes across the Borough, there appeared to be sufficient Reception capacity to meet immediate future demand into Reception Classes.

In relation to projected numbers on roll, there appeared to be sufficient capacity to meet the needs of all children requiring a school place, although at less than 2%, it was expected to be

tight. Future demand was not evenly distributed across the Borough with future pressures expected to be greater in the central areas of the Borough and less so on the periphery.

The presentation went on to outline proposed solutions to address the pressures, as follows:

- approval to expand Gaskell, SS Osmund and Andrew and St Catherine's Primary Schools equating to an additional 295 places at an estimated cost of approximately £3.4m supported from DfE Basic Need capital funding and expansion of all three schools to offer full two form entry provision;
- the exploration of further opportunities to expand Gilnow, Markland Hill and Moorgate Schools; and
- proposals for a new two form entry primary free school proposed by the DfE to open by September, 2020 in the south of the Borough.

The presentation then went on to focus on secondary school projections and advised that demand for Year 7 admissions would remain high and exceed available capacity without further expansions.

Demand for secondary school places across all year groups would remain and would exceed available capacity without further expansions and/or new schools.

The presentation outlined various proposals to address secondary school places and included:

- September, 2017 – expansion of Turton High School to create 150 permanent places, temporary expansion of various schools to create 121 intake places at a cost of approximately £2.4m;
- September, 2018 – expansion of Canon Slade, Essa, Ladybridge, Sharples, St Joseph, Thornleigh and Westhoughton Schools to create 1,195 permanent places at a cost of approximately £15.5m met from Basic Need funding support;

- September, 2019 – proposed new 900 place King's Leadership Academy with the cost to be met by ESFA subject to Council providing the site; and
- September, 2020 – discussions on-going with the DfE in respect of possible further Academy Free Schools under Wave 13 (three proposals presently being considered by the DfE to access 'Presumption Free School' Grant assistance but have asked how the balance of funding (to be provided by the Local Authority) could be met.

The presentation then went to identify other pupil place issues, namely:

- continuing pressure for Special School and Alternative Provision pupil places;
- new housing developments;
- proposed revisions to the Greater Manchester Spatial Development was likely to see new housing prioritised in urban areas with few possibilities to expand existing schools and limited opportunities to secure suitable for new schools;
- possible reduction in securing Section 106 Agreement commuted funding to provide capital for school places if development sites proved unviable;
- unknown effects of Brexit and future population changes;
- increasing diversity across the school estate – reducing powers and influence of the Council to manage change – any new school have to be free schools;
- limited capital; and
- Wave 14 Free School Programme (Primary and Secondary) to invite applications from Spring 2019 – closes 30th September, 2019

Following the presentation, members made a number of comments/observations:

- the current temporary use of Susan Isaacs Nursery and the potential to continue the arrangement if a suitable opportunity arose;
- the opportunities to further expand Ladybridge School once the Music Service relocated;

- the difficulties in planning for school places when parents did not necessarily want attendance at their nearest school;
- the issues associated with managing the expectations and aspirations of parents on standards within different schools;
- school capacity and how the Authority was planning to meet the projected gap in provision for secondary school places in 2023/24 – members were advised that officers continued to engage in dialogue with colleagues in the DfE about future pressures and how these could be met;
- the uncertainty of population figures and the effect of Brexit on planning provision;
- the benefits of working closely with the Planning Department on potential developments within the Borough, including the Town Centre, to assist with projected population figures and anticipated demand; and
- the funding, operational arrangements and issues associated with the building of free schools and the proposals being developed in the south of the Borough.

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

30. EARLY INTERVENTION AND POSITIVE PARENTING

Ms J. Robinson gave a presentation on the Start Well parenting programmes which offered a range of support to families with children aged between 0-19 years.

The delivery model focused on early intervention with sessions delivered in Start Well Centres, schools and other community venues through effective partnership working and co-delivery with Start Well, health visitors and the Behaviour Support Service.

Parenting Support included Incredible Years Baby, Incredible Year Pre-School, Triple P and parent/child developmental sessions based on the Solihull approach.

The presentation went on to describe each of the services in depth, how they were accessed and their benefits. In summary, they included:

- Incredible Years Baby – help to promote a baby’s social, emotional and language development;
- Incredible Years Pre-School – help to build parent and child relationships; and
- Triple P – stands for Positive Parenting Programme and offers an eight-week programme designed specifically to help parents of children with behavioural issues – it had proven to be effective in reducing difficult behaviour in children and young people.

The presentation advised that other parenting support was also available, as follows:

- parents could ask Start Well children and family workers or health teams for guidance on parenting;
- an increase in self-referrals as parents were starting to communicate via social media and within Start Well development sessions;
- an increase in numbers of enquiries around parenting through the Start Well centres and parents were signposted to the most relevant courses; and
- referrals that were not suitable for IT and Triple P courses were offered outreach sessions on a 1:1 basis or to access the Start Well Centres’ programmes where Solihull parenting approaches were embedded into delivery.

The presentation also outlined the current Start Well priorities of:

- all partners to be trained in Solihull parenting approach;
- identified Start Well staff to deliver Solihull parenting training to partners including the community and voluntary sector;
- Incredible Years toddler groups being developed;
- Triple P to be delivered in conjunction with schools and partners across Bolton;

- advertising of Parenting Support was being reviewed;
and
- self-referral process to be reviewed in line with Early Help review.

Following the presentation, members made a number of comments/observations as follows:

- the initiatives in place to reach parents that currently did not engage with the start well services;
- the complexities involved in assessing whether the initiatives had positively impacted on school readiness although it was generally accepted that they must have made a difference;
- the strong ongoing commitment to partnership and integrated working to develop, grow and expand services that will reach out to parents;
- the welcome move towards one size fits one services;
and
- the role of the Triple P in preventing many children from going into care.

Resolved – That Ms Robinson be thanked for her informative presentation.

31. EXCLUSIONS

Mr Birch, Mr Hart and Ms Jackson gave a presentation on exclusions in Bolton schools.

The presentation provided statistical data on the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions for primary and secondary schools in Bolton.

Members were reminded that there were currently 18,000 pupils attending 19 secondary schools and 27,982 pupils attending 102 primary schools.

With regard to primary schools, there had been 12 permanent exclusions from September, 2018 to January, 2019 compared

to 2 in the same period last year. During 2017/18 there had been 249 fixed term exclusions and 5 exclusions in total.

In relation to secondary schools, there had been 41 permanent exclusions between September, 2018 and January, 2019 compared to 26 in during the same period last year. During 2017/18, there had been 3010 fixed term exclusions and 86 permanent exclusions in total.

The information revealed that:

- a decrease in the number of exclusions citing persistent disruptive behaviour;
- an increase in one off incidents;
- an increase in the number of key stage 1 pupils receiving an exclusion; and
- a decrease in the number of pupils with Educational Health and Care Plans receiving exclusions.

It was noted that the data mirrored the national picture.

The recent Ofsted Inspection and subsequent judgement demonstrated that behaviour in Bolton schools continued to be good.

The presentation went on to outline various strategic planning measures that were being put in place to address the issues, namely:

- school based SEMH provisions to proactively address concerns earlier;
- the establishment of a collaborative working group of senior pastoral leaders to consolidate and share good practice;
- the development of policy via the Primary and Secondary Headteacher's Forum to adapt to the changing needs of young people and families; and
- the development of the Behaviour Support Service to offer more bespoke training to school staff and support to families.

Following the presentation, members made a number of comments/observations:

- the national increase in the numbers of children being home schooled - there was no evidence in Bolton that home schooling was significantly increasing;
- there were dedicated resources in Bolton to work with children being home schooled to ensure that standards were being met;
- the need to identify issues earlier;
- the effect of social media and associated pressures on behaviour and health; and
- the importance of pastoral schemes in schools and mediation with families.

Resolved – That Mr Birch, Mr Hart and Ms Jackson be thanked for their informative presentation.

32. 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 Member – Children's Portfolio held on 3rd December, 2018 and 21st January, 2019
- the Children's PDG held on 14th January, 2019.

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

(The meeting started at 6.00pm and finished at 7.15pm)

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