

BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Meeting held on 20 September 2022 at 6.00 pm

Present:-

Cllr S Gabriel – Vice-Chair, in the Chair

Present: Cllr L Lewis, Cllr D Butt, Cllr E Coope, Cllr S Moore, Cllr L Northover
and Cllr S Phillips,

Also in attendance: Cllr Burton and Cllr Haines attended virtually
S Welch, Academy Parent Governor Rep, P Martin, Parent Governor
Rep
M Saxy, Diocesan Rep
H Maflah and Z Sasic, Members of Youth Parliament

31. Apologies

Apologies had been received from Councillor Rocca.

Councillors Burton and Haines attended virtually, forgoing any voting rights.
Councillor Gabriel chaired the meeting in Councillor Burton's absence.

32. Substitute Members

There were no substitute members on this occasion.

33. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest received on this occasion.

34. Confirmation of Minutes

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 26 July 2022, having previously been circulated, be confirmed as read and agreed and signed by the Chair.

35. Action Sheet

The action sheet was noted.

36. Public Issues

There were no public issues received on this occasion.

37. Report for Children's Overview and Scrutiny - Care Experienced Young People Themed Service Update

The Director of Corporate Parenting & Permanence presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The Care Experienced themed report provided an update on the progress of improvement work within the Care Experienced Young People's Service in Children's Social Care. It highlighted activity undertaken within a recent themed 'practice week', including a summary presentation included at Appendix 1 to the Report. In addition, it detailed updates on progress on the provision of health passports, housing options and the recent opening of the BCP Care Leaver Hub '333'. Appendix 2 of the Report highlighted the voice of the young people involved in the design and development of the Hub, with their views on the outcome.

There were several actions identified for the next quarter to continue the service's improvement journey.

The Committee discussed the report and comments were made, including:

- In response to a query about making sure all care leavers had access to the Hub, including possible transport support, the Committee was advised that the service would ensure that care leavers got the support and advice they needed which might be virtual, if appropriate.
- The Committee was advised that the health passports provided details of a child's health and improvements had been made in ensuring children and young people understood them and they were presented and available in a young person friendly way
- A Member of Youth Parliament enquired about housing and the Youth Homelessness Board and the Committee was advised that it considered care leavers from the age of 18, however planning for accommodation started once a personal advisor was allocated when a young person turned 16.
- In response to a query regarding accommodation needs and priority for housing, the Committee was advised that support was provided up to the age of 25. Reassurance was given that Children's services worked closely with housing and that gold band priority was given to all care leavers until the age of 25.
- In response to a query regarding out of hours support, the Committee was advised that the care leavers hub was opened on a flexible basis, opening some evenings and Saturdays, in addition out of hours support was also provided and there could be additional named support for example a foster carer providing support to an identified young person. The Care Leavers Offer was highlighted which provided a suite of information was currently being updated and would be provided by personal advisors to care leavers
- In response to a query regarding educational opportunities, including providing funding to enable care leavers to attend university. It was

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advised that there was a bursary for this purpose and the service would provide assistance with accommodation where possible.

- A Committee Member who also sat on the Corporate Parenting Board wished to express support of the Care Leavers Hub '333' and supported the youth homelessness board and funding for a prevention worker.
- In response to a query regarding staffing, the Committee was advised that the structure would be fully recruited and permanent soon
- In response to a query regarding ensuring the voice that of the children were heard, the Committee was advised that the service wanted to ensure that the voice of the child could be evident and demonstrated throughout their case files. It was noted that the care leavers hub had enabled young people who had not previously engaged.
- The Committee was advised that there were a couple of young people who lived outside of the area and had not taken up the offer of housing back within BCP
- The Committee was reassured that any care leaver who had additional needs which prevented them from gaining employment would be supported up to the age of 25 and if they had significant needs that met the requirements of adult social care then they would be passed to that service.
- In response to a query regarding continuity of social worker support, the Committee was advised that Social worker turnover was a national problem but the service was trying to ensure that a proper handover was undertaken and communicated
- In response to a query regarding personal supervision, the Committee was advised that social workers need time to reflect on whether they were making a positive impact and if not, to consider different ways to engage. Consistency across the teams was highlighted as important and the need to strive to improve circumstances for the young person.
- In response to a query regarding engagement, communication and feedback and how data could be collated, the Committee was advised that newsletters were sent out to young people and information was shared with carers to pass on. The Committee was advised of the methods used to collect young person's views for the care leavers strategy and whilst it was acknowledged that engagement had increased, some care leavers did not want to engage
- In response to a query, the Committee was advised of daily and monthly reports for visits to young people to ensure that children and young people were seen. It was highlighted that there had been work around personal advisors ensuring that their visits were recorded on the system.

RSOLVED that the Committee note the progress made and areas for further action.

38. SEND Improvement Journey – SEND Expansion of Places

The Head of Service, School Place Planning and Capital, presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The number of children and young people assessed as requiring a place at a specialist education provision in the BCP area had increased in recent years and this had increased expenditure on high needs.

As part of the Council's strategy to address growth and associated financial pressure, work was underway to implement a programme of expansion of specialist school places across BCP which would help provide local access to cost effective places and a reduction in the Council's reliance on costly independent placements.

The Council was developing a range of options to assess the scope for the development of specialist school places on local school sites. A total of 34 expressions of interest were received from a total of 16 trusts/schools with proposals for between 300-500 places. The Council provided details of schemes currently in development across four tranches which delivered places in the short, medium and longer term. Options for the delivery of places include:

- The option to continue to work in partnership with local school leaders to explore options and develop proposals to create provision on other local school sites.
- The option to commission new specialist school provision as part of the government's Free School Programme. The Council was in the process of preparing an application to the Department for Education (DfE) for new free school provision. The application deadline for new school proposals was 21 October 2022 and the outcome of the initial application stage was expected to be announced late 2022 to early 2023. For successful applications, proposer groups would submit their applications in February 2023 as part of a competitive process and through the publication of local authority specifications and proposer guidance.

The option to make no change to existing school provision/maintain the status

quo was not an option and would fail to make progress in delivering the improvements necessary as contained in the Council's Written Statement of Action (WSOA).

The Committee discussed the report and comments were made, including:

- In response to a query regarding the potential schemes for Winchelsea and Somerford, the Committee was advised that they could be complete rebuilds or could be remodelling of some blocks and areas of the schools

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- In response to a query regarding the need for extra provision, the Committee was advised of the reasons for it which included the increase of SEND pupils, population changes and the fact that provision for SEND had lagged behind mainstream provision and now needed urgent attention
- The Director of Children's Services highlighted that additional specialist provision was not the only answer to manage the EHCP increase and that providing support to mainstream schools would also address the issue
- A Committee Member, who was also a member of SEND improvement board, advised that she was fully supportive of these schemes and enquired whether the Council's current financial situation would hinder the progress of capital projects to deliver more specialist places. The Portfolio Holder for Council Priorities and Delivery highlighted the difference between capital and revenue and acknowledged that the positive impact would be felt on the high needs' deficit
- A Member of Youth Parliament enquired about the current provision available and was advised that there was some resource bases, satellite provision and excellent provision within some of the mainstream schools, which was being replicated to expand good practice
- In response to whether tranche one was on track, the Committee was advised that the key fact was the impact on revenue expenditure and the savings were highlighted, but the timescale for tangible and noticeable shift would take time as children would not be asked to move provision. The focus would be to track it and ensure that the provision being made would make savings in the future
- A Committee Member highlighted the futures programme which was being developed by a specialist provision which included sixth form provision and would give young people the life skills and confidence, they required post school. The Committee was advised that the scheme had suffered some delays and the reasons for it were highlighted.
- In response to a query regarding movement into the area of pupils with SEND, the increase of pupils was discussed and the reasons for the movement were highlighted.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the progress of the programme of expansion and express thanks to the officers for their hard work.

39. Update - Longspee Ensbury Park Campus

The Head of Service, School Place Planning and Capital, presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provided an overview of the impact of the newly created specialist school places provided at Longspee Ensbury Park Campus, part of Ambitions Academy Trust. Working with Ambitions Academy Trust, the

Council redeveloped the former Bournemouth Learning Centre to provide a satellite of Longspee Special School. The new campus opened for a full complement of 54 children in September 2021 and provided places for secondary school aged children 11-16 with a diagnosis of social emotional mental health (SEMH)/autistic spectrum condition (ASC) and complex needs. The scheme to redevelop the accommodation at BLC was funded by the Council and following the development of a challenging and complex project, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee requested the opportunity to review key aspects of the scheme to promote learning, including:

- the impact of the newly created campus on the opportunities for teaching and learning for children and young people;
- lessons learned and mitigations for future schemes.

The Committee discussed the report and comments were made, including:

- A Committee Member expressed gratitude at seeing evidence from lessons learnt in relation to the finance of this project being demonstrated in other projects considered by other Committees and advised that it was clear to see the value that this project had added to the lives of the pupils who attended the provision
- In response to a query from a MYP regarding feedback from the pupils, the Director of Education shared a positive story of a pupil who was greatly benefitting from the provision
- The Committee Members who had visited the campus all expressed how impressed they were with the specialist provision
- The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Council Priorities and Delivery was grateful that the work on strengthening governance and financial management of these programmes going forward was apparent.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the:

- a) the impact of the newly created campus on the outcomes of children and young people;**
- b) lessons learned and mitigations for future schemes.**

40. Review of the new RE syllabus from BCP SACRE

The Education Adviser, Quality Assurance, Support & Partnership 0-25, presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) was a statutory responsibility of every Local Authority (LA) in England. The locally Agreed Syllabus was a statutory syllabus of Religious Education (RE) prepared under Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996 and adopted by the LA under that schedule. It must be followed in state funded schools without a designated denomination. Once adopted by the LA, the Agreed Syllabus sets out what pupils should be taught and could include the expected standards of pupils' performance at different stages.

Every five years SACRE must convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference to review and commission a revised syllabus that reflects changing communities, curriculum, and culture of the local area. The current Agreed Syllabus was a legacy joint [Bournemouth and Poole syllabus](#).

BCP SACRE had commissioned and procured Jan Lever Group to review, plan, write and deliver the first BCP Agreed Syllabus which would be taught in schools from September 2023. The syllabus would be covered by up to a £20,000 budget and would be delivered within the agreed budget and timeline.

The Committee discussed the report and comments were made, including:

- In response to a query, the Committee was advised that the syllabus was created for maintained schools to follow, and that Academies had a choice whether to use the locally agreed syllabus. The Committee was advised that most Academies within BCP would use the syllabus for the base of their religious education
- A Committee Member welcomed and supported the review and hoped that all schools across BCP would roll it out
- An MYP advised that she had met with one of the RE Advisors and had requested she was included in any further work as it was closely aligned to her campaign.
- A Committee Member requested information on the number of academies who had engaged with the review and were going to use the locally agreed syllabus. **ACTION**
- The Diocesan Representative advised the Committee that when a Church School had a SIAMS inspection it was enquired whether the school was following the locally agreed syllabus so it was in their interests to follow it.

RESOLVED that the Committee endorse the locally agreed syllabus to full Council and note that:

- a) The locally Agreed Syllabus was a statutory syllabus of RE prepared under Schedule 31 to the Education Act 1996 and adopted by the Local Authority.**
- b) The BCP agreed syllabus would reflect our local communities and support the teaching of high-quality RE within our local education system.**
- c) BCP SACRE had completed its functions and had commissioned and approved the review of the Agreed Syllabus.**

41. School Admission Arrangements 2024/25 – Determination

The Team Manager, School Admissions, presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'E' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

BCP Council administered admission arrangements for its community and voluntary controlled schools. There was a legal requirement to determine the arrangements annually as described in the School Admissions Code 2021 and associated legislation.

There were no proposed changes to the admission arrangements for the 2024/25 academic year from those which were publicly consulted upon and determined by the Council for the 2023/24 academic year.

The local authority must also formulate and publish a scheme to coordinate the admission arrangements for all publicly funded schools within their area for the 2024/25 academic year.

The Committee discussed the report and comments were made:

- The maintained schools the policy was in relation to were detailed to the Committee
- It was noted that the changes to the admission arrangements had been considered by the Committee last year.

RECOMMENDED that Cabinet approve:

(a) the admission arrangements for maintained community and voluntary controlled schools in accordance with Part III, Chapter I, Section 89 of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act and Section 1 of the School Admissions Code 2014

(b) the Coordinated Admissions Scheme for the administration of the 2021/22 year in accordance with Part III, Chapter I, Section 89 of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act and paragraphs 2.202.22 of the School Admissions Code 2014.

Voting: For - unanimous

42. Key Performance Indicators - Quarter 1

The Interim Head of Performance, Quality and Assurance presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'F' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provided a performance update for the period April - June 2022 (Quarter 1 2022-23) for the key performance indicators relating to Children's Services as detailed in the Corporate Performance Scorecard.

The Committee discussed the report and comments were made, including:

- A Committee Member referred to the new course which was being proposed for unaccompanied asylum seekers and detailed the difficulties faced by them educationally within the current system

- In response to a query regarding schools advising they were inadequately resourced to meet the increased complex needs of some pupils, the Committee was advised that funding was an issue, together with the rise of EHCPs
- The Committee was advised of the Education Entitlement Board which would include Headteachers and was going to meet for the first time soon and would monitor children missing education and exclusions. It was noted that the Board would bring stakeholders together to ensure a joined up and positive response
- In response to a query regarding the cost implications of providing education for excluded pupils and the consequence of them being excluded having wider cost implications across other services, the Committee was advised that the service had a duty to provide alternative provision for permanently excluded pupils
- An MYP advised that as part of her work she had been made aware of pupils who did not go to school for fear of being harmed or bullied by disruptive pupils and in response the Committee was advised that a schools first duty was to ensure pupils within the school were safe.
- In response to a query about the number of children missing out of education and the possible reasons for this, the Committee was advised that it was difficult to make a judgment on why which could include complex reasons. The Committee was advised that schools would say that they offered a comprehensive curriculum, and it was not thought that would be a reason.
- In response to a query regarding how Academies report into the data, the Committee was advised of the methods used to collect the data both daily and weekly.

RESOLVED that the Committee note the report.

43. Portfolio Holder Update

The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Council Priorities and Delivery advised that a large amount of her Portfolio had been considered at Committee today and advised of updates regarding the SEND Improvement Plan and the SEND led improvement partner who had been working in close contact with the team. The Committee was also advised that there was a lot of work being undertaken with the Department for Education regarding the pressure on the high needs block.

The Portfolio Holder with responsibility for Children and Young People advised the Committee that Children's Services had two Ofsted inspections due in October looking at Children in Need and Child Protection Plans and the Youth Justice Service, it was noted that these inspections would put pressure on services which were already strained.

The Committee was also advised of two dates for their diaries: an invitation to an open day at the new care leavers hub on 24 October 2022 and an all-Member engagement event with the MYPs being held on 11 October 2022 from 5-7pm.

Councillor Lewis left the meeting at 8:07pm.

44. Forward Plan

The Committee was advised that a working group was being scheduled to consider issues surrounding child exploitation.

The MYPs requested their Annual Report be added to the Forward Plan for the March 2023 Committee. **ADD TO FORWARD PLAN.**

45. Dates of Future Meetings

The dates of future meetings were noted, and a typing error was highlighted.

46. Exclusion of Press and Public

RESOLVED that under Section 100 (A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraphs 1 and 2 in Part I of Schedule 12A of the Act and that the public interest in withholding the information outweighs such interest in disclosing the information.

47. SEND Programme of Expansion - Broadstone Middle School

The Director of Education presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'G' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The number of children and young people assessed as requiring a place at a specialist education provision in the BCP area had increased in recent years and this had increased expenditure on high needs. As part of the Council's strategy to address growth and associated financial pressure, work was underway to implement a programme of expansion of specialist school places across the conurbation which would help provide local access to cost effective places and a reduction in the Council's reliance on costly independent placements. As one of several schemes currently in development, it was planned that Broadstone Middle School run by the Castleman Academy Trust would expand the existing resource base to provide an additional eight resource base places for children with autism spectrum condition (ASC). The proposal was for the expansion of the existing resource base known locally as The Link, from 15 places to 23 places from September 2022.

Other options considered included creating provision on other local school sites, commissioning new school provision and doing nothing. The Council continued to explore options to create provision on other local school sites and was in the process of preparing an application to the Department for Education (DfE) for new free school provision. Doing nothing was not an option for meeting the Council's High Needs strategy. The proposal to

expand the resource base at Broadstone Middle School was the only option in this case which achieved a timely progression pathway to enable the current Year 8 children to remain on roll in Year 9. This was the recommended option and for which an approval for a budget as contained in Appendix 1 was necessary to provide an additional 8 places from September 2022. A temporary change in age range would provide continuity for existing children on roll. From September 2023/24 the resource base would offer a total of 23 places for children aged 9-13 years old. The approved capital programme included funding for the proposed scheme as part of a programme of SEND place expansion.

The Committee discussed the report and comments were made, including:

- In response to a query regarding onward progression and those moving through the school years, the Committee was advised that there was a whole range of creative and viable options being considered such as possibility of a satellite on site provision, the challenge was to complete the project on time for the incoming Year 8 cohort
- The positivity of Academy Trust was welcomed
- The Committee requested a progress report in 2023 **ADD TO FORWARD PLAN**

RESOLVED that the Committee note the capital budget as set out in Appendix 1 to expand the existing resource base provision at Broadstone Middle School. The funding would provide a new Learning Resource Centre co-located on the existing school site.

The meeting ended at 8.20 pm

CHAIR

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