

Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny and Policy Development
Committee

Meeting held 25 June 2018

PRESENT: Councillors Mick Rooney (Chair), Andy Bainbridge, Lisa Banes, Simon Clement-Jones, Mohammad Maroof, Abtisam Mohamed, Bob Pullin, Ian Saunders, Alison Teal, Sophie Wilson and Richard Shaw (Substitute Member)

Non-Council Members in attendance:-

Gillian Foster, (Diocese Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)
Alison Warner, (School Governor Representative - Non-Council Non-Voting Member)
Sam Evans, (Diocese Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)
Alice Riddell, (Healthwatch Sheffield, Observer)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies for absence were received from the Deputy Chair (Councillor Cliff Woodcraft), with Councillor Richard Shaw attending as his nominated substitute, Francyne Johnson, Colin Ross and Sophie Wilson, and from Joanna Heery (Parent Governor Representative – Non-Council Voting Member) and Peter Naldrett (Parent Governor Representative – Non-Council Voting Member).

2. EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

2.1 No items were identified where resolutions may be moved to exclude the public and press.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

3.1 In relation to Agenda Item 8 (Update on Academisation), the following declarations of interest were made:-

- Councillor Andy Bainbridge declared a personal interest as the Council's representative on the Learn Sheffield Board;
- Councillor Abtisam Mohamed declared a personal interest as a member of the Brigantia Academy Trust and as a Governor of Firth Park School; and
- Alison Warner declared a personal interest as a member of the Chorus Academy Trust and a Director of the Brigantia Academy Trust.

4. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

4.1 Viv Lockwood raised the following two questions:-

- (a) In the light of the more negative aspects of academies, which had been highlighted through thorough academic research by respected educational bodies and organisations, what detailed, qualitative data, is collected by the Local Authority from schools, and especially from academies, which investigates and evaluates such known phenomena in reaching conclusions about school effectiveness?
- (b) In view of the absence of any evidence that becoming an academy improves pupil attainment, while reducing autonomy for those schools within a multi-academy trust, and removing local democratic accountability, will the Local Authority now guarantee not to promote any further academisation of our locally maintained schools, and be, at the least, neutral in its attitude?

4.2 In response to the first question, Pam Smith (Head of Primary and Targeted Intervention) stated that the person with overall responsibility for the curriculum organised by academies was the Regional Schools Commissioner, and not the Local Authority. The Local Authority worked very closely with Learn Sheffield and the schools and academies, at all phases, to ensure that there was an agreed school categorisation process. Ms Smith indicated that OfSTED judgements were also used as part of the categorisation process, and that she was kept apprised of all categorisations. The aim of this work was to help identify whether schools or academies needed any further support from Learn Sheffield.

4.3 In response to the second question, Pam Smith stated that she totally refuted the comments made with regard to the Local Authority being responsible for actively encouraging maintained schools to become academies, indicating that this was definitely not the case, and that officers were always neutral when providing advice to schools on this issue.

4.4 The Chair advised Mr Lockwood that if he was not happy with the responses, he could raise the same questions at a meeting of the Cabinet, in the hope of receiving a more detailed explanation, and was entitled to circulate any information on this issue to Members of the Council.

5. ACADEMISATION IN SHEFFIELD

5.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Business Strategy, People Services, providing an update on academisation in Sheffield. The report was supported by a presentation from Pam Smith (Head of Primary and Targeted Intervention).

5.2 Ms Smith provided contextual information on the spread of academies across the City, the number of academy conversions to date, the definitions of the different school types, the range of multi-academy trusts, and where they were situated. She referred to the improvement priorities for South Yorkshire, the KS2 results by

school type, the new academies which had been built using Basic Need Grant funding since 2011, the Capital Programme and academies, the building condition and academies, and concluded by referring to the future priorities.

5.3 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- Of the 94 Local Authority maintained schools across all sectors in the City, only two were secondary schools, with the remainder being either primary or special schools.
- Whilst the overall decision in terms of whether a school converts to an academy is with the school's Governing Body, there would be some level of discussion with the Local Authority, as part of the process, predominantly in terms of requesting support with regard to setting out priorities. The Local Authority did not have the power to refuse requests by schools to convert to academies on the basis that it was Government policy.
- Whilst the decision as to who would sponsor a new school rested with the Regional Schools Commissioner and his/her advisers, the Local Authority was involved as it was expected to administer the bidding process, in the case of new schools, for prospective sponsors. Also, whilst the Local Authority does not decide the sponsor, it could express an opinion with regard to the quality of the bids.
- It was accepted that there could be issues regarding the long-term sustainability of individual schools being sponsored by small trusts. However, if any such concerns were identified, officers of the Local Authority would meet with colleagues in the Department for Education, and the Regional Schools Commissioner, to discuss this with them. The Local Authority would always provide support to such schools to ensure they were viable.
- Whilst there were issues in terms of the amount of the Building Condition Grant allocated to the Council reducing as more schools converted, and subsequently, more pupils transferred to, academies, the Local Authority would request due diligence on both sides with regard to the long-term viability of those schools in poor condition.
- Learn Sheffield would continue to work in partnership with all schools and academies, therefore there would still be a clear process, which the Council could access and assess key information. The level to which academies engaged with this varied.
- A number of academy trusts, such as Oasis, sponsored academies in disadvantaged areas across the country. The Council ensured that these academies were monitored alongside the maintained schools sector, on issues such as the increase in exclusions. This could be investigated by the Council, through the Performance and Analysis Service.

- The increase in the percentage of pupils, at Key Stage 2, achieving the expected standard in reading, writing and maths, from 2016 to 2017, was very positive, and was the culmination of a five-year concerted effort to improve such standards. This had involved the Local Authority working closely with all schools and academies, and in partnership with the Teaching Schools and Learn Sheffield, and had resulted in a steady year on year improvement.
- All schools were continually monitoring their future, with the majority of schools, particularly community schools, being reasonably relaxed in this regard. Regardless of their status, all schools continued to work on being good or better, and to improve pupil outcomes year on year. However, there was a need for the Local Authority to look at all forms of partnership working in the light of changes to the national funding formula.
- Information, including data, on how the improvements in KS2 outcomes had been driven by more community schools converting to academies, would be circulated to Members of the Committee.
- Details of bids made by schools to the Condition Improvement Fund (CIF) were published on the Department for Education website.
- The Local Authority did not gain anything when a school converted to an academy, but would lose an element of funding in terms of the reduction in pupil numbers in maintained schools.
- Maintained schools requiring capital investment from the Council would be included on a waiting list, and would be required to provide the business case for that investment.
- In terms of Sheffield's national rankings with regard to final outcomes in 2017, at Key Stages 4 and 5, the City was in the third quartile at KS4 and the second quartile at KS5, out of a total of 150 local authorities.

5.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report now submitted, together with the information reported as part of the presentation and the responses to the questions raised; and
- (b) requests the Executive Director, People Services, to:-
 - (i) write to Learn Sheffield, requesting confirmation on their policy regarding academy conversions; and
 - (ii) submit reports to a future meeting of the Committee on:-
 - (A) school funding;

- (B) capital programme; and
- (C) the linkages between academies and local neighbourhood priorities.

6. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

6.1 12th March 2018

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12th March 2018, were approved as a correct record and, arising from Item 9 – Elective Home Education, Deborah Fellowes (Policy and Improvement Officer) confirmed that the Council had produced a submission to the Government, as part of the consultation on the Government's review of the Elective Home Education Service, and she would circulate this to Members of the Committee.

6.2 16th May 2018

The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 16th May 2018, were approved as a correct record.

7. WARD LEVEL CONTEXTUAL, ATTAINMENT AND PROGRESS DATA

7.1 The Committee considered a report of the Performance and Analysis Service, People Services, providing a summary of Ward level data across a number of contextual, attainment and progress measures in Sheffield.

7.2 Kate Wilkinson (Service Manager - Performance and Analysis Service) attended the meeting and introduced the report.

7.3 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-

- It would be possible, in terms of future reports, to include statistical information in terms of the percentage of pupils attending schools in areas where they were resident.
- Whilst it appeared to be a slight oddity, the national average in respect of Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 4 progress was a minus figure.
- Mobility of pupils could be up to 30% in some Council Wards. Data on mobility could be included in future reports.
- On the basis that it was accepted that there could be huge differentials in terms of levels of deprivation between neighbourhoods within some Wards, such as Beauchief and Greenhill, it would be possible to produce similar statistics, as set out in the report, at a neighbourhood level.

7.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information contained in the report now submitted, together with the responses to the questions raised; and
- (b) requests that:-
 - (i) the information set out in the report be forwarded to the Chairs of the Local Area Partnerships; and
 - (ii) the statistics in the report be included in the reports requested under the previous item on academisation, in order to provide a link between the policy and the numbers.

8. DRAFT WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

- 8.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer containing the draft Work Programme for 2018/19.
- 8.2 Councillor Abtisam Mohamed queried whether there were any educational projects/initiatives currently benefitting from EU funding, and which could be adversely affected following Brexit.
- 8.3 Councillor Mohammad Maroof questioned whether data on exclusions/attainment regarding pupils of rural Pakistan (Kashmir and Mirpur) origin could be extracted from figures for children of general Pakistani origin, and included in future reports of this nature.
- 8.4 Further to an issue raised by Councillor Bob Pullin, the Chair stated that the report on the work of the Scrutiny Cross Party Working Group regarding Children's Social Care would be submitted to the Cabinet in July 2018.
- 8.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-
 - (a) notes and approves the draft Work Programme for 2018/19, as set out in the report now submitted; and
 - (b) requests the Policy and Improvement Officer to:-
 - (i) check whether there are any such educational projects/initiatives benefitting from EU funding, and which could be adversely affected by Brexit and, if so, submit a report thereon to a future meeting; and
 - (ii) refer Councillor Mohammad Maroof's request to the Head of Primary and Targeted Intervention and the Service Manager – Performance and Analysis Service.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

- 9.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 3rd

September 2018, at 10.00 am, in the Town Hall.

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