

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL

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

Meeting held 4 November 2019

PRESENT: Councillors Mick Rooney (Chair), Mike Levery (Deputy Chair),
Mike Chaplin, Julie Grocutt, Alan Law, Joe Otten, Kevin Oxley,
Colin Ross, Jim Steinke, Alison Teal and Cliff Woodcraft

Non-Council Members in attendance:-

Alison Warner, (School Governor Representative - Non-Council Non-Voting Member)

Sam Evans, (Diocese Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)

Peter Naldrett, (Parent Governor Representative - Non-Council Voting Member)

Alice Riddell, (Healthwatch Sheffield, Observer)

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1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

- 1.1 An apology for absence was received from Councillor Francyne Johnson.

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 7 (Inclusion Update and Special Educational Needs Inspection Action Plan) (Item 6 of these minutes), Councillor Cliff Woodcraft and Sam Evans declared personal interests as members of the same church as Tim Armstrong (Head of Special Educational Needs).

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 14th October 2019, were approved as a correct record and, arising therefrom:-

(a) further to queries raised by the Chair, the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson) reported that she was still awaiting information from officers, as detailed in (i) Item 4 – Minutes of Previous Meetings (paragraph 4.1 (a) and (ii) Item 6 – Adoption Service Annual Report 2018/19 (paragraph 6.5(d)(i)), and would circulate the information requested to members of the Committee, when received; and

(b) the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson) reported that the

special meeting of the Committee, arranged for 4th November 2019, from 4.30 pm 6.30 pm, to consider the 'Make Your Mark – UK User Consultation Outcomes' had been cancelled at the request of the Youth Council, as it would be better for it to be after the Youth Council have attended a national Parliament event for this consultation. A future date would be agreed with the Youth Council.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS

- 5.1 There were no questions raised or petitions submitted by members of the public.

6. INCLUSION UPDATE AND SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS INSPECTION ACTION PLAN

- 6.1 The Committee received a report of the Director of Commissioning, Inclusion and Learning, providing an update on the progress made to date on Sheffield's response to the local area Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) inspection conducted in November 2018. In addition to the report, Members had also been provided with the Written Statement of Action – April 2019, the updated Written Statement of Action – August 2019, and the letter from Ofsted/Care Quality Commission following the inspection.
- 6.2 In attendance for this item were Councillor Jackie Drayton (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families), Councillor Abtisam Mohamed (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills), Dawn Walton (Director of Commissioning, Inclusion and Learning), Tim Armstrong (Head of Special Educational Needs), Sapphire Johnson (Head of Commissioning – Children, Young People and Maternity), Brian Hughes (Director of Commissioning, NHS Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group) and Andrew Jones (Interim Head of Primary and Targeted Intervention).
- 6.3 Tim Armstrong and Sapphire Johnson introduced the report, referring to each of the seven areas of weakness identified as part of the inspection, and which were all being addressed within the Written Statement of Action, and monitored on a monthly basis by the Inclusion Improvement Board. Reference was made, under each of the seven areas, to the developments made, the evidence of impact and the next steps.
- 6.4 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-
- In terms of plans to increase capacity, the new Service Manager for the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Statutory Assessment and Review Service (SENDSARS) was a replacement for the former post-holder, and a new Programme Manager for the SEND improvement programme had recently been appointed. As a long-term measure for increasing capacity in schools, there were plans to provide two new special schools in the City, the first opening in 2021/22, and in the short-term, the Authority would be working closely with schools to deliver a range of different services. Efforts would be

made to target specific needs in the seven locality areas. Government funding had been less than required, based on the numbers of children and young people with special needs and disabilities, and this was likely to be a similar picture going forward. Additional capacity had been provided in the CCG, specifically in the area of overseeing Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs). There had been issues in terms of recruiting to some posts within the specialist teams, which was a national issue, and one which had led the Authority and the CCG to look at a different model of delivery, as opposed to relying simply on recruitment. One such change included looking to put more health staff in schools to provide the necessary support in a classroom environment. It was not expected that teaching staff would have to take on more responsibility, but more ensuring that school staff had the necessary skills to be able to meet the needs of the children and young people.

- One of the main aims was to support children and young people in inclusive, local schools, whilst being aware of the growing demand. At present, all the City's special schools were either at, or beyond, capacity. There was a need to ensure that there was the correct scope of provision and correct levels of expertise within schools. Some schools, however, felt that they did not have the adequate expertise for some children. Even some of the special schools were not able to provide sufficiently for those children with the most complex needs, which had resulted in some children being sent to provision out of the City. The lack of provision and the growing demand has led the Authority to look to provide additional schools.
- A co-production session had recently been held at which participants had looked at a number of issues regarding the SEND Strategy, primarily focussing on the area of communication. The findings of the session were included in the Strategy. There were now flowcharts for parents and schools/services, explaining how the SEN processes work, and which focused on Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) and SEN support. There were also three animations on the local offer, explaining how SEN support, EHCPs and MyPlans work. In addition to this, step by step information/advice had been provided for schools.
- Every school must have a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO), who were required to take relevant training at regular intervals. Training videos had been developed, and were available online for SENCOs.
- One of the new special schools planned was to be located in Norfolk Park, with the location of the second yet to be confirmed.
- The Authority engaged closely with parents through the Parent Carer Forum, to ensure that the information and advice available to parents was as easy to understand as possible. The Authority was also working with the Forum in connection with developing the website – 'The Local Offer', where all information on SEND provision was contained.
- The work in terms of addressing the outcomes regarding the seven areas of

weakness identified during the inspection had to be completed by the time the Inspectors returned, which was expected to be in October 2020.

- Feedback received from parents had shown that parents were more concerned about provision for their children in secondary schools, mainly due to the larger school environment and the numbers of teachers, and this had resulted in an increase in requests from parents for EHCPs in Y5 to prepare for secondary school. Whilst both primary and secondary schools had to implement the same plan, there were a number of differences in terms of how such plans were implemented, mainly with regard to how the workforce could address the children's needs. As part of the work to address this, a secondary Head Teacher had been commissioned into the sector leadership model and a secondary City-wide SENCO had also been identified. This was alongside primary representatives already in place. Transition from primary to secondary school had been identified as a key issue, with an emphasis being placed on identifying vulnerable children at an early stage, and implementing necessary measures in an attempt to ensure that their pathway through to secondary school could be as smooth as possible. It was not always easy to identify needs at an early stage, particularly in the case of those children with learning difficulties or mental health needs. The CCG was trying very hard to increase clinical capacity, but due to the problems in terms of the recruitment of specialist staff, a problem replicated nationally, the Group was looking at introducing different delivery models. This included changing the roles of existing staff, such as asking for more of those in support level roles in order to free up specialist capacity. Other work had included looking at providing regional training. There was a need to make sure that school staff had all the necessary skills in order to deliver interventions identified by specialist staff. It was important to ensure, however, that schools had the necessary resources to implement this.
- One of the main reasons as to why provision in schools was not as effective as would be liked was due to Government funding cuts, predominantly with regard to the loss of a number of experienced staff due to lack of funding, who had been specifically trained to deal with children and young people with SEND. It was important that all parties, including parents, schools and specialist staff, had the opportunity to contribute to the SEND Strategy, in an attempt to ensure that the City's children and young people received the best support they possibly could.

6.5 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the contents of the report, and the accompanying papers, now submitted, together with the information now reported and the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks Councillors Jackie Drayton and Abtisam Mohamed, and Tim Armstrong and Sapphire Johnson for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised; and

(c) requests:-

- (i) the Director of Commissioning, Inclusion and Learning and a representative of the Sheffield Clinical Commissioning Group to attend the Committee meeting to be held on 3rd February 2020, to report on the Commissioning Plan and the work of the Clinical Commissioning Group in more detail, respectively; and
- (ii) that a representative of the Parent Carer Forum attends the same meeting to report on its involvement in terms of the SEND Strategy.

7. PUPIL OUTCOMES, CITY CONTEXT AND SCHOOL PERFORMANCE 2018/19

7.1 The Committee received a presentation from Stephen Betts (Chief Executive, Learn Sheffield) on an interim update in terms of pupil outcomes, city context and school performance 2018/19.

7.2 Also in attendance for this item were Councillor Abtisam Mohamed (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills), Andrew Jones (Interim Head of Primary and Targeted Intervention) and Dan Rice (Performance and Analysis Service).

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

- Progress 8 measured how pupils performed in comparison to other pupils with similar starting points, that is who had left primary school at a similar level. Whilst performance of Progress 8 had been slightly lower than in 2018, it was comparable with national ratings. There had been an improvement in overall Attainment 8 on the basis that the cohort of pupils had started at a higher point, which had been expected because this Y11 cohort had left primary school after the point where Sheffield's performance in Key Stage 2 had started to improve. Whilst there had been slightly more added value at Key Stages 3 and 4, there was also evidence, based on the outcomes, to show that primary schools were adding value. There was also a need to be mindful that sector performance could not be judged on just one or two outcome measures.
- In summary, the performance of the City remained satisfactory, but with the acknowledgement that there still remained room for improvement. The aspiration was that Sheffield outperformed national benchmarks, and whilst it was still positive that Sheffield was still one of the strongest performing core cities, this shouldn't be regarded as enough. Whilst it was accepted that there was a considerable level of contextualisation, it was considered that comparisons with other areas (national, core cities and statutory neighbours) was the correct approach to take.
- The results were set in the longer-term historical context that Sheffield's performance for many years had been in the bottom quartile of local authorities nationally, before a five-year upward trend that had peaked in

2017. The performance in 2018 and 2019 had plateaued. The focus was now to consider how the Authority could progress from this position.

- The gap to the national average had widened slightly in the Early Years Good Level of Development measure, although the outcome of the Early Years Inequality gap remained amongst the highest performing nationally.
- Outcomes in terms of phonics had given rise to particular concerns, and this remained the “stand-out” measure from a negative perspective, with the City ranked amongst the lowest local authorities nationally.
- Primary outcomes were broadly similar in 2019 to the previous year, with the performance at greater depth measure more in line with national than expected standard measures. This reflected that Sheffield children performed in line with national when compared to pupils with similar starting points. The make-up of the Sheffield cohort contains more pupils with lower starting points and this impacted on the proportion who reached the expected standards in KS1 and KS2.
- The results of the more detailed analysis in terms of performance measured against the various pupil characteristics was not available until later in the school year, and would be reported to the Committee in 2020.
- Any measure will always result in either an advantage or disadvantage for certain categories of pupils. There were particular challenges at pre-school age in that those children in areas where there was no nursery provision were being potentially disadvantaged. Whilst the Council’s Early Years’ Service worked closely with Learn Sheffield, it was acknowledged that there was a need for a closer working relationship in order to address this imbalance.
- The performance at Key Stage 5 remained strong, with Sheffield remaining in the first and second quartile, and as the top ranked core city for the third consecutive year. It was also noted that this included the outcomes of only those pupils who had taken A levels.

7.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes the information reported as part of the presentation now made, together with the responses to the questions raised;
- (b) thanks Councillor Abtisam Mohamed, Stephen Betts, Andrew Jones and Dan Rice for attending the meeting, and responding to the questions raised; and
- (c) requests the Chief Executive, Learn Sheffield, submits future reports on this issue that include a detailed analysis of pupil outcomes and school performance that clearly sets out what the issues are, and what the data means, through commentary, together with information on how the Authority uses this as evidence, and how it is going to make changes through the

School Improvement Strategy.

8. LEARN SHEFFIELD - REVIEW OF PREVIOUS SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT STRATEGY AND SHARING THE NEW STRATEGY

- 8.1 The Committee received a report of Stephen Betts (Chief Executive, Learn Sheffield) providing a review of the impact of Sheffield's School Improvement Strategy 2016-2018, including the role of primary school locality action plans, and also regarding the development of a new School Improvement Strategy (2019-2022) together with details of the next steps in the review and development of the wider education strategy.
- 8.2 Also in attendance for this item were Councillor Abtisam Mohamed (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills), Andrew Jones (Interim Head of Primary and Targeted Intervention) and Dan Rice (Performance and Analysis Service).
- 8.3 Members of the Committee raised questions, and the following responses were provided:-
- It would seem very likely that lower attendance would be a big driver in terms of deprivation, but it was not possible to give any conclusive response at the meeting.
 - The reasons why the Authority did not use national free school meals and national non free school meals as a comparative measure was that it mirrored Ofsted's approach of using the national non free school meal group as a comparator. However, such data was broken down to free and non-free in other reports.
 - Learn Sheffield does seek to identify other local authorities or groups of local authorities who have performed strongly in relation to national benchmarks, but this has proved very difficult. The performance of some pupil groups, in particular, white British pupils, who also had other protected characteristics, such as pupil premium or SEND, was a national challenge.
 - It had proved very challenging to recruit to a post of Deputy Chief Executive at Learn Sheffield, mainly due to the small scale of the partnership model. Such challenges had been faced in other local authority areas and, in terms of going forward, Learn Sheffield was trying to be more innovative in terms of how it worked with its partners in order to try and mitigate any potential challenges.
 - The reason for referencing the fact that Sheffield had outperformed in terms of its deprivation rankings was simply due to the fact that for a period of 10 years previously, the Authority did not outperform such rankings.
 - It was acknowledged that the Strategy reflected a lean partnership model. Additional funding would be required to develop further intervention strategies. As new strategies were developed, it was important to ensure that

their impact was reviewed.

- Those areas in which the Authority was underperforming, and where the gaps were not being closed, such as phonics, were fed into the School Improvement Strategy at a number of different levels. Learn Sheffield worked with the Authority to provide data to schools, and then the localities, which would support them to analyse exactly where the problems were. The schools and localities would be asked to address any city-wide issues as part of their respective Action Plans. There was a need to identify additional funding to help implement more intervention strategies at a city level.

8.4 RESOLVED: That the Committee:-

- (a) notes (i) the contents of the report now submitted, together with the information now reported and the responses to the questions raised and (ii) the resolution in Item 7.4 (c); and
- (b) thanks Councillor Abtisam Mohamed, Steven Betts, Andrew Jones and Dan Rice for attending the meeting and responding to the questions raised.

9. WORK PROGRAMME 2019/20

9.1 The Committee received a report of the Policy and Improvement Officer (Alice Nicholson) containing the Work Programme for 2019/20.

9.2 Members made a number of comments, as follows:-

- In terms of those items yet to be scheduled, MAST and Early Years was a priority.
- Briefing papers on the Schools Funding Formula and an update on services and support for Gypsy and Travelling and Roma Families be submitted to a future meeting.
- Voice and Influence of Children and Young People be considered at the Committee's meeting to be held on 2nd March, 2020, to include an update from Councillor Jim Steinke on the work of the Task and Finish Group.
- The Chair would talk to Councillor Ben Curran (Chair of the Safer and Stronger Communities Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee) to discuss which Committee would be better considering Gun and Knife Crime and Young People.

9.3 RESOLVED: That the Committee approves the contents of the Work Programme for 2019/20, taking into consideration the comments now made.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

10.1 It was noted that the next meeting of the Committee would be held on Monday, 2nd December 2019, at 10.00 a.m., in the Town Hall.