

Bristol City Council

Minutes of the People Scrutiny Commission

13 March 2023 at 5.00 pm



People Scrutiny Commission members present:

Cllr Tim Kent (Chair), Cllr Christine Townsend (Vice-Chair), Cllr Kerry Bailes, Cllr Brenda Massey, Cllr Sharon Scott, Cllr Mark Weston

Cabinet members in attendance:

Councillor Helen Holland, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Integrated Care System

Also in attendance:

Trish Mensah representing Bristol Older People's Forum

Officers present:

Abi Gbago, Executive Director: Children and Education
Reena Bhogal-Welsh, Interim Director: Education and Skills
Fiona Tudge, Director: Children, Families and Safer Communities
Hugh Evans, Executive Director: Adults and Communities
Stephen Beet, Acting Director: Adult Social Care
Nick Smith, Strategic Intelligence and Performance Manager
Paul Dury, Risk and Insurance Senior Officer
Mary Taylor, Head of Statutory SEND Service
Jonathan Wright, Transformation and Commissioning Lead
Ian Hird, Scrutiny Advisor

45 Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

The Chair welcomed all attendees to the meeting and explained the emergency evacuation procedure.

46 Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

It was noted that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Tim Wye and from Councillor Asher Craig, Deputy Mayor - Children Services, Education and Equalities.



47 Declarations of Interest

None.

48 Minutes of Previous Meeting

On the motion of the Chair, seconded by the Vice-Chair, the Commission **RESOLVED:**
That the minutes of the meeting of the People Scrutiny Commission held on 28 November 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

49 Action Tracker

The Commission noted the action tracker in relation to the 28 November meeting.

50 Chair's Business

The Chair advised members that, further to the Commission's consideration on 26 September 2022 of the fact-finding report into the use of social media by Council staff in respect of the Bristol Parent Carer Forum, the motion agreed at that meeting calling for the Mayor and Chief Executive to arrange an external investigation into the matter, and the subsequent 18 October 2022 Full Council motion on the same subject, he had submitted a question to the 14 March Full Council/Member Forum asking the Mayor to advise when the investigation would begin.

The Commission noted the above information.

51 Public Forum

Public statements:

It was noted that the following public statements had been received:

Statement 1 - Rachel Green - topic: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) services

Statement 2 - Jen Smith - topic: SEND services. Jen Smith was in attendance at the meeting and presented her statement.

Statement 3 - Mark Pennington-Field - topic: Closure of fostering service facilities at Capgrave Crescent and Rodbourne Road. In relation to this statement, it was noted that details of these two properties were included as part of a Cabinet decision taken in January 2023 on the disposal of certain surplus council



estate properties. It was also noted that officers were drafting a separate briefing about fostering service facilities.

The Chair suggested (see also the Work Programme item below) that an in-depth look at fostering and adoption services could be considered as part of the Commission's 2023/24 work programme.

Public questions:

It was noted that the following public questions had been received:

Question 1 - Jen Smith

Topic: Schools reported to the School Improvement Team

I would like to know how many and which schools have been reported to the School Improvement Team for the academic years 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21, 2021/22?

And, broken down into primary, secondary, specialist, PRU, other and LA maintained and academy/free school.

Officer response:

The School Partnerships Team is a small team who provide school improvement support specifically for maintained primary schools. They provide external support and challenge for local authority primary headteachers and leaders. The team do not fulfil a reporting function for concerns regarding schools.

Jen Smith asked the following supplementary question:

In a Subject Access Request I received a while back, I noticed, at the end of 2019, a member of council staff was concerned about the way a Bristol secondary school treated my SEND child and were reporting issues to the school improvement team. If anyone, including members of BCC staff are reporting SEND concerns with schools, where is this being reported, archived and logged?

It was noted that officers would investigate this point and then respond to the questioner.

Note: subsequent to the meeting, officers provided a response to the supplementary question as follows: Any concerns raised with the local authority with regards to maintained schools are followed up by local authority officers or, if they are academies, then parent carers are supported/guided as to how to report their concerns through the school complaints process which is documented on their website. Alternatively, if the child in question has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan, then the parent/carer would be supported by the Statutory SEND team

Question 2 - Jen Smith

Topic: Learning disability and autism programme

Recommendations in the Learning Disability and Autism Programme say:

'The programme will have a number of component projects to address the following aims:

'Better forecasting of demand from Children's Services into adult health and care services, and better transitional arrangements to 'bridge the gap' between childhood and adulthood.'



How is this likely to be achieved considering not all children and young people will be able to have an autism assessment due to a local criteria set by the NHS Bristol, N Somerset & S Gloucestershire Integrated Care Boards from this March?

Officer response:

Please note the data for forecasting will be drawn from Children Services and Education data.

We are not able to respond any further to this question as it relates to Sirona Care and Health's autism assessment service for BNSSG and a change to the way they manage their waiting lists, which has changed from 1 March – see link:

<https://www.sirona-cic.org.uk/nhsservices/childrens-services/referral-for-a-specialist-autism-assessment-service/>

This question would be more appropriately directed to Sirona Care and Health as lead for autism assessments.

The points set out in the question are noted, however, and it may be the case that scrutiny members (People Scrutiny Commission and more particularly the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee) may wish to consider looking into the issues raised by this policy/criteria change in greater depth when setting their work programme for the year ahead.

Jen Smith asked the following supplementary question:

In November 2022, Phil Minns wrote following the SEND re-inspection that 'leaders are taking steps to reduce the waiting times for neurodiversity diagnosis and CAMHS assessments'.

Education does not work in isolation to health and social care. They do work in partnership.

Is the council not concerned about the additional burden that a deliberate failure to diagnose will impact on the High Needs block?

In response, the Chair advised that he had submitted a question relating to this matter to the 14 March Full Council/Member Forum. He was also aware that the issue had been flagged with the Council's Health Scrutiny Committee.

Question 3 - Jen Smith

Topic: Secondary school resource bases – Performance Target BP0M220 – Increase the number of new specialist school places available

Papers to Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for the 14 February 2023 state: '... there have been some issues with secondary mainstream schools not wanting to open resource bases as this will have an impact on their results. This has been a barrier and we are opting to work with special schools to mitigate this. We need a substantial number of secondary specialist places created in phase 2 to meet the needs of the city. We are on target to exceed 450 specialist provision places by 2024'.

Which secondary schools do not want resource bases because it will impact on their results?

Officer response:

This comment is not related to specific secondary schools. This is a pressure expressed by secondary schools generally under the current accountability framework and publication of performance tables. The



projects agreed in phase 2 of the specialist provision project will provide sufficient secondary school provision in the city. The newly announced special free school will also provide additional capacity.

Jen Smith asked the following supplementary question:

'The statement to OSMB specifically says: 'negotiation is underway with schools who will be involved in phase 2, and there have been some issues with secondary mainstream schools not wanting to open resource bases as this will impact on their results.'

I'll take an answer on which schools these are. I'm asking the question again.'

The Chair suggested that officers should check if any further detail could be provided on this matter. The Executive Director: Children and Education commented that work was being taking forward on inclusion in schools; officers were committed to ensuring transparency with scrutiny members around this work.

Note: subsequent to the meeting, officers provided a further response to the supplementary question as follows:

This is a nationwide pressure felt by all secondary schools as a result of the publication of performance tables. There is no record that this comment relates to specific secondary schools. Secondary school provision has been prioritised with phase 2 of the specialist provision project on target to deliver sufficient secondary school provision. In addition to this, the special free school will provide additional secondary capacity.

Question 4 - Jen Smith

Topic: Education Health and Care performance update

According to the papers, there were 47 appeals related to section I. How many of these:

Are currently live and not resolved?

Were appealed because mainstream was more expensive than the school the family were seeking because the panel had not applied the correct legal test?

How many subsequently had section I changed to whatever it was the parent was requesting without a hearing?

How many subsequently had section I changed to whatever it was the parent was requesting with a hearing?

How many did not have section I changed either with a hearing or without?

Officer response:

Of the 47 appeals lodged in 2022 including section I (placement), 27 have now been completed with the Tribunal Services. Appeals are lodged for many reasons and as stated in the report the local authority takes seriously its responsibility to support families and find resolution whilst meeting its statutory duties.

a. 23 appeals were resolved between the local authority and parents with Section I being amended without attending a hearing

b. <5 were resolved with section I changed as a result of a hearing

c. <5 did not have section I changed at all, either with or without a hearing.



Jen Smith asked the following supplementary question:

What improvement work is the SEND team undertaking to ensure they name schools in section I in a lawful manner, negating the need for families to force their legal rights via appeal hearings and ensuring limited LA resources are used appropriately?

In response, officers confirmed that the authority was undertaking this work in a lawful manner. It was noted that, once an appeal was lodged, discussions would be held with parents to understand and try to resolve issues satisfactorily so that an appeal hearing may not be needed.

Question 5 – Sandra Thomas

Topic: Autism assessments

I am writing this in relation to the change of criteria and the stopping Autism Assessments from the 1st of March which means referrals received will be prioritised on the needs of each young child, young person and family by Sirona Care and Health.

I find it shocking that requests for assessments will only be considered if the child and young people meet the referral criteria in which the education placement is breaking down, not in Education or employment, children and young people whose family are at risk of breakdown, children who are in care or CIN plan, or children who are under CAMHS, so basically a child needs to be at crisis?

Every child and young person has the right to have their educational needs met, their health needs met, their social care needs met.

I would like to ask:-

Q1. Has the Bristol Autism Team had input into this new criteria? When was the meeting held? Who was invited?

Q2. Has the following been discussed?

- The Equality Act 2010-A child/young person must not be discriminated because of their disability, every child has the right to enjoy the highest possible standard of health, to access health and other related services and to facilitate for the treatment.
- Disability Discrimination - Section 6 of the Equality Act?
- Safeguarding children- (Empowerment, Prevention, Proportionality, Protection, Partnership, Accountability) by allowing this new criteria is going to cause emotional harm/neglect to children and young people.

Q3. Why isn't more funds made available to train up more staff to assess for Autism as it is only a team of three, who work term time only, surely if more trained assessors are available all year round, then this will indeed help the waiting lists?

Simply by ignoring a child has needs will only cause further mental health problems. The criteria to access CAMHS is unattainable and the therapy offered is behind in the times. Children and young people have the rights to be supported in their health and wellbeing.



The system is failing our children, we are our children's/young persons advocates, our voice/their voices need to be heard, to understand the impact of not having needs met, by having needs undiagnosed, for not being 'disabled enough', for having a hidden disability. By not receiving support will lead to mental health crisis, and more young adults taking their lives. The new criteria is discriminatory!

Officer response:

We are not able to respond directly to these questions as they relate to Sirona Care and Health's autism assessment service for BNSSG and a change to the way they manage their waiting lists, which has changed from 1 March – see link:

<https://www.sirona-cic.org.uk/nhsservices/childrens-services/referral-for-a-specialist-autism-assessment-service/>

These questions would be more appropriately directed to Sirona Care and Health as lead for autism assessments.

The points set out in the questions are noted, however, and it may be the case that scrutiny members (People Scrutiny Commission and more particularly the Health Scrutiny Sub-Committee) may wish to consider looking into the issues raised by this policy/criteria change in greater depth when setting their work programme for the year ahead.

Noting that the questioner concerned was not in attendance at the meeting, the Chair (with reference to question 2 above) reiterated that the issue had been flagged with the Council's Health Scrutiny Committee.

52 Quarterly Performance Report (Quarter 2 - 2022/23)

The Commission considered and discussed the quarter 2 2022/23 performance report. It was noted that this report had been prepared in line with the new corporate approach to performance reporting, with performance progress tracked under each of the themes in the Council's Corporate Strategy, plus a data appendix specific for the Commission; in relation to the performance metrics and actions reported for this quarter against the People Scrutiny Commission remit:

- 38% of priority measures were on or above target (6 of 16).
- 64% of priority measures had improved (9 of 14).
- 86% of actions were currently on track or better (25 of 29).

It was noted that members had submitted the following questions/points in advance of the meeting (these are set out below together with written responses from officers):

a. Questions/points raised in advance by Cllr Townsend

Q1. General question: What is the difference between 'on target' and 'on schedule' when used within these documents?

Officer written response:



Performance indicators monitor progress against set milestones (e.g. build 100 houses: Q1 = Tgt 25 / Q2 Tgt = 50 / Q3 Tgt = 75 / Q4 Tgt = 100). At any given reporting period, progress is compared to the target. If at Q2 performance is 49 it will be recorded as 'Worse than target'; if performance is 51, it will be recorded as 'Better than target' and if performance is 50, it will be recorded as 'On Target'. The term 'On Track' is used for the actions and does not use such precise parameters; the lead manager is asked to consider where the action is, in terms of achieving its goal. The term 'On Schedule' is the term used to describe the progress of the combined KPIs and actions for each theme.

In response to a follow-up question from Cllr Townsend at the meeting, it was confirmed that where targets were graduated through the year, the latest/relevant 'in-year' position was recorded.

Q2. Appendix A1 - Thematic performance clinic report – children and young people: The narrative from the Director/author of p6 refers to school attendance. There are comparisons between term 1 for 2021 and term 2 for this year – we need 'like for like' if comparisons are going to be made to provide apparent evidence of improvement. There is a statement that reiterates how guidance becomes statutory later this year – this was pulled in May 2022 so why is it still being stated in formal reports?

Officer written response:

It is accepted that to make comparison meaningful, the same time periods need to be analysed. Please see detailed below the figures relating to the Bristol Inclusion and Fair Access Panel (BIFAP) which meets on a fortnightly basis to identify the most appropriate education provision for pupils at risk of permanent exclusion. The figures below indicate the number of pupils who have actually moved as a result of the BIFAP process. Comparison between the two academic years Terms 1 and 2 indicate a significant reduction in the number of pupils

2021-22	-	Term 1 - 39
		Term 2 - 40
2022-23	-	Term 1 - 12
		Term 2 - 12

The guidance document referred to in the question above refers to 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (published May 2022) which is currently non-statutory with a plan for it to become statutory no sooner than September 2023. We have received a letter from the DfE dated 16th December 2022 to confirm that despite changes to the Schools Bill, it does not mark any change to policy in terms of attendance. This position was also supported via a brief webinar provided by the DfE.

The period between the guidance changing from statutory to non-statutory provides a period of time to facilitate LA planning and included in this is the trial of the Locality Attendance meetings which includes one to cover independent schools (in line with the guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance and the DfE Attendance Self-Assessment).

The Attendance Locality Meetings will be evaluated in due course. The meetings are co-chaired where possible and provide an opportunity to develop a community of practice and share ideas. It is important for the local authority to work in partnership with our independent schools due to the links between safeguarding and attendance.



Q3. The Attendance team are working as though the above will become statutory, but it was made clear in May 2022 that this was not going to happen. DSG funds as well as General Fund are being used in this non-statutory area of work (fee paying independent schools) – Why is this administration using scarce resources to support the fee-paying sector? The DSG is a ring-fenced piece of funding that cannot be used to fund any area other than state education but this administration is using it to support fee-paying schools as a choice – this must stop it is a mis-use of public funds

Officer written response:

It is not always possible to draw a clean line between statutory and non-statutory activity - for example, the communication methods provided by the LA to schools to help them to carry out their statutory duties (recognised nationally by the DfE as good practice) in itself may not be a statutory service but is cost effective in supporting a cohort size of around 63,000 pupils.

Under general public law principles, LAs have an obligation to take into account the 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance in exercising their functions and, as such, should give due consideration to that guidance when making decisions about their attendance service and on school attendance matters, and this includes independent schools.

We have checked with our DfE advisor about the relationship between other LAs and the independent sector in relation to this area of activity and Bristol was described as ahead in its thinking and practice.

In noting the above response, Cllr Townsend stated that whilst recognising that the authority had safeguarding duties to fulfil for all children regardless of where they were being educated, and accepting that certain non-statutory work was happening, DSG should only be used to support state educated children.

Q4. Besides the non-statutory top-up system that will be subject to review as part of the Delivering Better Value in SEND programme, what other areas of non-statutory work is this administration choosing to fund with the scarce educational funds? Are these in danger of also being a mis-use of public funds in the way the use of the DSG to support the independent sector currently is? Who/how knows this?

Officer written response:

The Delivering Better Value in SEND (DBV) programme and the High Needs Block programme are the work streams where a deep dive of these issues will be undertaken. The programmes have identified key areas of focus. More than half of all local authorities have been invited to join either the Safety Valve or DBV programmes. Bristol is part of the DBV; this programme is a robust evidence gathering programme to support local authorities to identify the most impactful changes that can be made to improve outcomes for children and young people. Key work streams will include the private sector (both Schools and Alternative Learning Provision). £1.1m will come from the DfE to support any non-statutory roles such as the core programme team and core delivery partners.

The Schools Forum has again agreed to top-slice funding to enable transformation work in Inclusion and SEND. This includes funding a small core programme team. Programmes such as the Belonging with SEND school-based inclusion projects are funded through this funding stream.



Non-statutory spend is more commonly thought of as that which funds early support and early intervention activities aimed at improving outcomes for children and young people and is key in ensuring the de-escalation of the severity of need and reduces recourse to expensive high-cost placements.

In discussion, the Executive Director: Children and Education advised that scrutiny members would be kept informed of progress in taking forward the DBV in SEND programme.

Q5. Appendix A1 - Thematic performance clinic report - economy and skills: P7 clearly indicates there are serious issues with targeting employment work with disadvantaged groups – City of Bristol College is not the only post-16 provider in this city, what work is happening with 6th form colleges and other providers?

Officer written response:

The Council's Post-16 team works closely with a wide range of providers to meet the needs of young people who are NEET or at risk of NEET from disadvantaged communities. The team has established an Into Learning network with over 200 members - including front line staff working with young people, post-16 providers and youth services. Through this forum, providers are able to feed in important updates about local courses and advice services, and front-line workers are able to bring individual cases to help identify appropriate post-16 places. Over the last year, a number of new transition panels have also been established together with key education settings – including schools and alternative learning providers. These panels include key stakeholders that can support individual young people aged 15/16 to support their successful transition into post 16 education. All these information sharing and re-engagement activities involve our partner FE colleges, St Brendan's Sixth Form College and local schools and academies with sixth forms, as well as a wide range of independent training providers serving young people most at risk in Bristol. For any young people who disengage from post-16 education, training and employment, there are a range of in-year short re-engagement courses that help get young people back on track - including those provided by The Prince's Trust, Creative Youth Network; 16-19 Independent People; and Hartcliffe & Withywood Ventures.

Q6. How is this administration recording the success of mainstream and other education settings in ensuring their year 11 students have a successful transition to post-16 and remain there?

Officer written response:

The Post-16 Team have a statutory responsibility to track all young people of academic age 16/17 and up to 25 for those with an Education Health and Care Plan. On a monthly basis, the team reports to the DfE on the number of young people in this group who are in learning, who are not in education, employment and training, and those whose current status is Not Known. As part of our data collection, we are able to identify post-16 outcomes achieved by mainstream and other education settings, including the young people who progress and which provider they progress to. This data is shared on a regular basis with our Post-16 Strategy Group which oversees our performance and supports our collaborative improvement planning.

Q7. BPPM224a (Reduce the number of suspensions from primary schools) and BPPM224b (Reduce the number of suspensions from secondary schools): given the caveats around data



collection/definition/internal trust/unlawful suspensions/impact on individual students in terms of sessions lost and incidents incurred, we need to have some discussion about what is happening to ratify this.

Officer written response:

Data in relation to formal suspensions and exclusions is ratified through the school census process. The Exclusions Task and Finish Group has been set up to examine the factors underpinning suspension and exclusion activity in the city and to facilitate reductions and early intervention to support inclusion. This is a multidisciplinary group including schools, local authority representatives and stakeholders.

b. Question/point raised in advance by Cllr Wye

Re: BPPM291b - Number of service users (aged 65+) in tier 3 (long term care): I wonder if some of the reason for this going in the wrong direction is that all the Extra Care Housing places have been taken up? I imagine there is not that much turnover in Extra Care Housing so it can get tied up. It is after all a very effective way at managing demand just before tier 3. I wonder if officers have any comment.

In response to this question, the Director: Adult Social Care confirmed that extra care housing was a tier 3 service. A positive approach was taken to maximise the number of individuals with long term care needs who were able to live in extra care housing rather than residential care. There had been a reduction in the number of older people living in residential care homes; further detail of the data via Power BI could be made available on request.

The Commission **RESOLVED**:

- To note the report and the above information.

53 People risks - Quarter 3 Corporate risk report

The Commission considered and discussed the quarter 3 corporate risk report for 2022/23.

Summary of main points raised:

1. It was noted that for quarter 3, one critical external risk was identified for the People directorate - BCCC5: Cost of living crisis impact on citizens and communities and that two new, emerging threat risks were:

- a. CRR51: Risk that Adult Social Care financial unsustainability due to national and local pressures leads to a failure to deliver statutory duties and budgetary control.
- b. CRR53: Risk that increased social worker and occupational therapist vacancies and sickness rates will result in vulnerable adults' care being compromised.

The risk tolerance levels and mitigating actions in place against these risks were also noted.

2. BCCC4 - Winter diseases including COVID-19 and Flu (formerly COVID-19 Population Health): In response to a question, the Risk and Insurance Senior Officer undertook to liaise with the risk owner with



a view to sending Cllr Weston further background detail and to provide context for the current risk tolerance level.

The Commission **RESOLVED**:

- To note the report and the above information.

54 Education Health and Care performance update

The Commission considered a report setting out the latest Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) performance update.

Summary of main points raised:

1. In terms of this latest performance update, it was noted that the most significant points were:

- a. The number of Education Health and Care needs assessments (EHCNA) finalised had increased in 2022 compared with 2021.
- b. Performance continued to be affected by the rise in new EHCNA requests: a 17.6% increase in requests from 2021 to 2022.
- c. At end of year, 38% of EHC needs assessments met the 20 week statutory timescale, an increase on 34% compared with 2021.
- d. The average wait time for an EHC needs assessment (open more than 20 weeks) at year end was 33 weeks.
- e. As at the end of December 2022 there were 493 active EHC needs assessments in the system, compared to 484 at the last time of reporting. 273 of these were within 20 weeks timescales; 220 exceeded the 20 week timescale.
- f. 2320 EHC plans out of 3007 (77%) were the subject of an annual review within the previous 12 months.
- g. In 2022, there were 120 appeals lodged, compared to 37 in 2021; appeal hearings could be held up to as much as 12 months or more after an appeal is lodged. Of the 120 lodged, 69 cases had been completed and 49 were ongoing.

2. Noting (as per section 2) that 1,000 EHCNA requests had been received in 2022 (an increase of 17.6%), the Chair commented that 791 EHC plans had been completed. Whilst this was an improved position, there was still a significant gap between EHCNA requests and plan completions. In discussion, it was noted that:

- it was proposed that scrutiny members would be involved in agreeing Key Performance Indicators for EHC needs assessments for the year ahead.
- the performance situation would continue to be monitored closely, taking account also of the context of the resources available for this area of work.
- work was continuing (including improved communication with families throughout the process) to improve the quality of assessment.

3. The Chair noted that para 2.4 (legacy cases) indicated that there were no current requests in the system which exceeded the 52 week timescale. He had though recently received emails from two



individuals which appeared to suggest that the timescale had been exceeded. It was noted that Cllr Kent would forward details of these cases to officers for investigation. *(Note: whilst it is not appropriate for individual cases to be referred to in detail via these minutes, this matter was investigated following the meeting, with responses sent to the Chair and to the individuals concerned).*

4. Councillor Bailes commented that whilst the report data indicated that performance was moving in the right direction, there was, in her view, still an issue around communication and improving relationships between officers, caseworkers and families; parents and carers, for example were less likely to be willing to engage in circumstances where they were waiting lengthy periods for tribunals following the lodging of appeals; the improvements being made did not feel visible to some parents, who felt they were being judged through the way the system operated. In response, the Executive Director: Children and Education commented that improving the relationship between the council and parents was at the forefront of the department's thinking. The challenges around this situation were recognised but the department was committed to ensuring there was improved and transparent communication with parents and carers and would welcome any contributions/ suggestions from members that would assist this.

5. Cllr Townsend suggested that it would be important to keep the position regarding tribunals under close review, noting the significant rise in appeals lodged (120 in 2022 compared to 37 in 2021). It was noted that the report included a breakdown analysis of the different categories of appeal. In discussion, officers stressed that the Council was committed to always exploring mediation to seek to resolve individual cases; to this end, extensive efforts were made to communicate with families as soon as appeals were lodged, to try to address issues and so avoid the need for a tribunal and the delay involved through that process.

6. The Chair suggested that in future updates, it would be useful to include a 'snapshot' of the number of ECH plans that did not include a named school within the plan (i.e. at section '1' of the plan – placement). It was noted that a special placement panel met each week to review these named school allocations.

7. At the conclusion of the discussion, the Chair thanked officers for the transparency of the data and information included in the report and welcomed the openness of the discussion between members and officers at this meeting.

The Commission **RESOLVED**:

- To note the report and the above information.

55 Learning disability and autism programme update

The Commission considered and discussed a report setting out an overview of the programme of work to create a better a market of accommodation, services, and support for people with a learning disability and autistic people.



Summary of main points raised:

1. It was noted that the programme was being developed following recommendations from the engagement work that the Council commissioned from the 31Ten consultancy last year. The programme would include a number of component projects to address the following aims:
 - a. To reduce the number of people with learning disability and autism in locked wards (the 'Assuring Transformation' cohort) and create a system that supports those with the most complex needs in the community, preventing hospital admission.
 - b. To increase access to appropriate community-based care and support through a Strategic Partner within a locality model; and increasing community support options and developing a complete and equitable provision offer in all localities.
 - c. To shape the local market in terms of sustainable supply of specialist and general needs housing.
 - d. To improve the forecasting of demand from Children's Services into adult health and care services, and better transitional arrangements to 'bridge the gap' between childhood and adulthood.
2. Cllr Holland commented that on 7 March, the Cabinet had received an update on the proposal to develop a single adult social care purchasing framework. Further to questions submitted to the Cabinet meeting by Cllr Wye, it was acknowledged that it was important to take on board feedback from providers and ensure that the commissioning process was sufficiently robust but not over-onerous. Another important consideration was the need to try to support individuals with complex needs so they could live locally and with as much independence as was possible and reduce the need for out-of-area placements. The Acting Director of Adult Social Care added that the aim was also to help as many individuals as possible into more active independent living within communities, including looking at possible employment opportunities and living in their own tenancies.
3. In response to a point raised by Cllr Weston, it was noted that there was a need for a more equitable distribution of specialist support centres across the city. As part of this, it would be important to identify suitable buildings in appropriate locations that might be suitable for adaptation by providers.
4. It was suggested that it would be useful for an update on the programme to be reported to the Commission in autumn 2023.

The Commission **RESOLVED**:

To note the report and the above information.

56 Work Programme

The Committee noted the work programme.

In discussion, members suggested that the following be flagged at this point as possible items that could be put forward for inclusion in the People scrutiny 2023/24 work programme:



- Ofsted children's services inspection – improvement plan
- Engagement in Children's and Education transformation programme
- Ongoing monitoring of Education, Health and Care needs assessment and plan performance (standing item)
- Ongoing overview (through People scrutiny leads) of actions arising from the People scrutiny working group on inclusion in mainstream education.
- Review of position re: teenage pregnancy.
- Review of position re: permanent exclusions of pupils/students from schools.
- Fostering/adoption services – in-depth look at provision/challenges faced, including support available for families/adoptive parents.
- Further update (autumn 2023) on taking forward the Learning Disability and Autism programme.

The Commission **RESOLVED:**

To note the latest update of the work programme and the above information.

CHAIR _____

