

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board Agenda



Date: Thursday, 31 August 2017

Time: 5.00 pm

Venue: The Writing Room - City Hall, College Green,
Bristol, BS1 5TR

Distribution:

Councillors: Geoff Gollop (Chair), Charlie Bolton, Tom Brook, Jude English, Gill Kirk, Brenda Massey, Graham Morris, Anthony Negus, Anna Keen, Donald Alexander and Mhairi Threlfall

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Date: Wednesday, 23 August 2017



Agenda

1. Welcome, Introductions and Safety Information

(Pages 4 - 5)

2. Apologies for absence.

3. Declarations of Interest

To note any declarations of interest from the Councillors. They are asked to indicate the relevant agenda item, the nature of the interest and in particular whether it is a **disclosable pecuniary interest**.

Any declarations of interest made at the meeting which is not on the register of interests should be notified to the Monitoring Officer for inclusion.

4. Minutes of the previous meeting.

To follow

5. Chair's Business

To note any announcements from the Chair

6. Public Forum

Up to 30 minutes is allowed for this item

Any member of the public or Councillor may participate in Public Forum. The detailed arrangements for so doing are set out in the Public Information Sheet at the back of this agenda. Public Forum items should be emailed to democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk and please note that the following deadlines will apply in relation to this meeting:-

Questions - Written questions must be received 3 clear working days prior to the meeting. For this meeting, this means that your question(s) must be received in this office at the latest by 5 pm on **name deadline date**

Petitions and Statements - Petitions and statements must be received on the working day prior to the meeting. For this meeting this means that your submission must be received in this office at the latest by 12.00 noon on **name deadline date**.



7. Scrutiny and the Youth Council

(Pages 6 - 7)

8. School Admissions Inquiry Day outcomes

(Pages 8 - 28)

9. Scrutiny Ways of Working

(Pages 29 - 30)

10. Work Programme

To note the work programme and members to provide a verbal update on the work to date.

(Pages 31 - 33)



Public Information Sheet

Inspection of Papers - Local Government
(Access to Information) Act 1985

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For those with hearing impairment

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Public Forum

Members of the public may make a written statement ask a question or present a petition to most meetings. Your statement or question will be sent to the Committee and be available in the meeting room one hour before the meeting. Please submit it to democratic.services@bristol.gov.uk or Democratic Services Section, Brunel House St Georges Road Bristol BS1 5UY. The following requirements apply:

- The statement is received no later than **12.00 noon on the working day before the meeting** and is about a matter which is the responsibility of the committee concerned.
- The question is received no later than **three clear working days before the meeting**.

Please see www.bristol.gov.uk and the '[How to Have Your Say](#)' pdf for the parameters of each individual Committee and what will happen to your submission.

Any statement submitted should be no longer than one side of A4 paper. If the statement is longer than this, then for reasons of cost, only the first sheet will be copied and made available at the meeting. For copyright reasons, we are unable to reproduce or publish newspaper or magazine articles that may be attached to statements.

By participating in public forum business, we will assume that you have consented to your name and the details of your submission being recorded and circulated to the committee. This information will also be made available at the meeting to which it relates and placed in the official minute book as a public record (available from Democratic Services).



We will try to remove personal information such as contact details. However, because of time constraints we cannot guarantee this, and you may therefore wish to consider if your statement contains information that you would prefer not to be in the public domain. Public Forum statements will not be posted on the council's website. Other committee papers may be placed on the council's website and information in them may be searchable on the internet.

Process during the meeting:

- Public Forum is normally one of the first items on the agenda, although statements and petitions that relate to specific items on the agenda may be taken just before the item concerned.
- There will be no debate on statements or petitions.
- The Chair will call each submission in turn. When you are invited to speak, please make sure that your presentation focuses on the key issues that you would like Members to consider. This will have the greatest impact.
- Your time allocation may have to be strictly limited if there are a lot of submissions.
- If there are a large number of submissions on one matter a representative may be requested to speak on the groups behalf.
- If you do not attend or speak at the meeting at which your public forum submission is being taken your statement will be noted by Members.

Webcasting/ Recording of meetings

Members of the public attending meetings or taking part in Public forum are advised that all Full Council and Cabinet meetings and some other committee meetings are now filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the council's [webcasting pages](#). The whole of the meeting is filmed (except where there are confidential or exempt items) and the footage will be available for two years. If you ask a question or make a representation, then you are likely to be filmed and will be deemed to have given your consent to this. If you do not wish to be filmed you need to make yourself known to the webcasting staff. However, the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 now means that persons attending meetings may take photographs, film and audio record the proceedings and report on the meeting (Oral commentary is not permitted during the meeting as it would be disruptive). Members of the public should therefore be aware that they may be filmed by others attending and that is not within the council's control.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

31st August 2017



Report of: Andrea Dell, Service Manager, Democratic Engagement

Title: Continuing the development of relations between Scrutiny and Bristol City Youth Council

Ward: Citywide

Officer Presenting Report: Andrea Dell, Service Manager, Democratic Engagement

Contact Telephone Number: 0117 9222483

Recommendation

Members are asked to consider and agree the following proposals which seek to strengthen the relationship between scrutiny and Bristol City Youth Council (BCYC)

Summary

This paper sets out to suggest how, now that a new way of working has emerged, scrutiny can continue to improve and build on the previous arrangements with Bristol City Youth Council (BCYC).



Context

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board (OSMB) recently identified 'Bristol City Youth Council' as one of their key priorities areas. For some time now Scrutiny Members and Officers have year on year been successfully building a constructive relationship with the Youth Council (YC). At times Members and Officers have attended the YC meetings and engaged in positive dialogue and offered practical support. On other occasions members of the Youth Council have attended and participated in formal scrutiny meetings and inquiry days.

As scrutiny is currently trialling a new way of working in 2017-2018 a scrutiny advisor and the BCC lead officer with the Youth Council, Martin James, have recently met to review the approach to joint working going forward. Below are some suggestions to help support the Scrutiny Lead Members to make in-roads and begin to engage with the Youth Council Members.

Proposal

- The Youth Council (YC) meet twice a month; one meeting is their closed, informal meeting and the other is an open, more formal meeting. It's suggested that the scrutiny Lead Members and Officer have an open invitation to all of BCYC's formal monthly meetings - diary appointments including agenda items will be sent out in advance. This provides scrutiny with opportunities to go along and listen to the young people's views and discussions and see if there's anything they can contribute and offer to support them with. This would be a positive and effective way to start engaging with the young people in a setting in which they are comfortable with. This would also mirror the process the YC already have agreed with the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.
- The Scrutiny Lead Members have a slot arranged on the Youth Councils 11th October open / formal meeting to go and speak with them (Sept agenda is already full). The Scrutiny Lead Members and Scrutiny Officer will discuss their approach to the meeting before-hand.
- The Scrutiny Officer has sent Martin James the list of priority scrutiny topics with a brief explanation about each one, so that he can talk informally to the young people initially about them and see if the young people might like to be involved in them in any way. From discussions it was suggested that for example: The Council Commissioning & Contracts Task and Finish Group - one member of the YC has recently been involved on the Bristol Youth Services /Youth Links commissioning process. Martin thinks it's possible he might like to come along to one of the task and finish groups meetings and explain from his perspective how he thought this went and if it could be improved etc etc.

Appendices:

None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background Papers: None.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

31st August 2017



Report of: Andrea Dell, Service Manager – Democratic Engagement

Title: An overview of the School Admission Arrangements in Bristol - Conclusions of the People Scrutiny Commission

Ward: Citywide

Officer Presenting Report: Paul Jacobs, Service Director- Education & Skills

Contact Telephone Number: 0117 92 24836

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board note the report for information.

Summary

The People Scrutiny Commission, at their meeting on 17th July 2017, resolved to refer the report to the Mayor and Cabinet for consideration. The report will go to Cabinet on 19th September 2017.

If the report and recommendations are accepted by the Mayor and Cabinet updates will be provided via an annual School Admissions report to Scrutiny.

School admission arrangements were highlighted as a priority area by the People Scrutiny Commission in the 2016/17 work programme.

Two Scrutiny events were held:

- Overview: A workshop in December 2016 provided Councillors with a detailed overview of how School Admission arrangements were administered in Bristol.
- Scrutiny: An Inquiry Day in February 2017 provided a forum for community stakeholders and school representatives to present their views on the school admission arrangements in Bristol.

The significant issues in the report are:

The report at Appendix A.

Background information and supporting documentation can be found [here](#).

Policy

1. Mayor Marvin Rees identified School Admissions as a priority area in The Bristol City Council Corporate Strategy 2017 - 2022. The strategy outlines seven key commitments, with one of them being 'We will increase the number of school places and introduce a fairer admissions policy'.

The Mayor recognised the need for in depth consideration of the complex issue and the item was referred to the People Scrutiny Commission.

The School Admissions Code and the School Admission Appeals Code set the legal framework for admissions. Both the local authority and schools must comply with the requirements and restrictions of these codes.

Consultation

2. Internal

2.1 In order to ensure the workshop provided the information Councillors required a survey was circulated prior to the workshop.

A steering group was formed to plan and oversee the workshop and inquiry day. Members of the steering group were:

- 4 x People Scrutiny councillors
- The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
- The Service Director for Education and Skills
- Officers from the School Admissions team
- Officers from Place Planning team.

The steering group have approved the attached report and recommendations (appendix A).

2.2 External

- A range of community representatives were invited to attend the inquiry day to present their view on school admission arrangements.
- All secondary schools in Bristol were invited to attend the inquiry day to present their view on school admission arrangements.

Context

3. Following the referral from the Mayor, School admission arrangements were highlighted as a priority area by the People Scrutiny Commission in the 2016/17 work programme. Councillors had questions about how the Local Authority approached school admissions and school appeals and further clarity was required around the relationship between Bristol City Council and Academies. Councillors felt it was important to receive information from residents on their experience of school admission arrangements in Bristol.

Due to the complexity of the issue it was agreed that two scrutiny events would be required:

i. Councillor workshop – December 2016

The workshop aimed to:

- ◆ Provide Councillors with an in-depth knowledge about School Admission arrangements in Bristol. The information provided at the workshop would assist Councillors to support and sign post constituents and manage public expectations prior, during and after the admissions process.
- ◆ Provide the knowledge required for the Inquiry Day, including information on the Local Authority’s strategic responsibilities.

The outcome of the workshop shaped the planning of an Inquiry Day.

ii. Inquiry Day – February 2017

The aim of the event was to receive information from external representatives and provide a forum for Councillors to ask questions;

- ◆ to receive information from community groups on their experiences of school admission arrangements
- ◆ to receive information about school admission arrangement from school representatives.

Following the Inquiry Day the steering group met to reflect on the wealth of knowledge received and agreed five recommendations.

On 17th July 2017, the People Scrutiny Commission formally agreed the report and recommendations, subject to amendments and referred the report to the Mayor and Cabinet for consideration, with Recommendations (R) as follows:

- R1. Strengthen Bristol City Council’s oversight of Admissions through an Annual update:
- a. Scrutiny to review school admissions information annually and submit a report which tracks the inquiry day recommendations, to the Executive Board.
 - b. It is recommended that the update is presented to scrutiny in late May/early June so observations can be included in the comments section of the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) annual report.
 - c. An annual meeting with key school representatives and the Council should be set up to review the annual report.
 - d. The report should include information on the percentage pupil premium intake in each Bristol school to present to schools for consideration.
- R2. Councillors recommend that the Mayor:
- a. meets with Principals and Chairs of Academy Boards, that have a catchment area that extends beyond Bristol, to discuss increasing the percentage of places reserved for Bristol pupils

- b. requires all new or expanding schools, which receive capital investment from Bristol City Council, to prioritise Bristol pupils as part of their admission criteria.
- R3. Officers to work with Councillors and community groups to strengthen the advice and support available for parents on admissions processes, building on the successful Health Champions model in Public Health (Appendix 1 provides an outline of Health Champions). Councillors should actively encourage parents / carers to use all three of their preference choices and include a local school.
- R4. Councillors recommend that the Mayor endorses a campaign, to include social media, faith groups and City Partners to recruit more Black and Minority Ethnicity members on BCC Appeals Panels.*
- R5. Request the Mayor, Councillors and City Partners take opportunities to promote Bristol schools and offer targeted support for under-subscribed schools, for example Councillors and City Partners could
- a. Meet with Head teachers and attend school open days
 - b. Promote local business links
 - c. Become a school governor.
 - d. Share key achievements and improvements in individual schools

* The School Appeals team ran a recruitment campaign that has attracted around 15 new panel members from the BME community. The new panel members have received training and have started to shadow appeals.

Proposal

4. It is recommended that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board:

Note the report and the recommendations attached as appendix A.

If the Mayor and Cabinet agree the report updates on the recommendations will be provided to Scrutiny via the annual School Admissions report.

Other Options Considered

5. None.

Risk Assessment

6. Not applicable

Public Sector Equality Duties

- 7 Before making a decision, section 149 Equality Act 2010 requires that each decision-maker considers the need to promote equality for persons with the following “protected characteristics”: age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation. Each decision-maker must, therefore, have due regard to the need to:
- i) Eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Equality Act 2010.
 - ii) Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to --
 - remove or minimise disadvantage suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic;
 - take steps to meet the needs of persons who share a relevant protected characteristic that are different from the needs of people who do not share it (in relation to disabled people, this includes, in particular, steps to take account of disabled persons' disabilities);
 - encourage persons who share a protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity in which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.
 - iii) Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it. This involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to –
 - tackle prejudice; and
 - promote understanding.

Legal and Resource Implications

Legal

None

Financial

None at this stage

Land

Not applicable.

Personnel

Not applicable.

Appendices:

Appendix A – An Overview of the School Admission Arrangements in Bristol - Conclusions of the People Scrutiny Commission.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Background information and supporting documentation has been provided in the appendices of the report ([here](#)).



BRISTOL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

An overview of the School Admission Arrangements in Bristol

Conclusions of the People Scrutiny Commission

May 2017



1. Executive Summary

Overview and Scrutiny, known in Bristol as 'Scrutiny' is a process that ensures that decisions taken by the Council and its partners reflect the opinions, wishes and priorities of residents in Bristol.

School admission arrangements were highlighted as a priority area by the People Scrutiny Commission in the 2016/17 work programme. Councillors had questions about how the Local Authority approached school admissions and school appeals, and further clarity was required around the relationship between Bristol City Council and Academies. Councillors felt it was important to receive information from residents on their experience of school admission arrangements in Bristol.

In addition to this Bristol elected a new Mayor in May 2016. Mayor Marvin Rees identified School Admissions as a priority area in [The Bristol City Council Corporate Strategy 2017 - 2022](#). The strategy outlines seven key commitments, with one of them being '*We will increase the number of school places and introduce a fairer admissions policy*'.

The Mayor recognised the need for in depth consideration of the complex issue and the item was referred to the People Scrutiny Commission.

Two Scrutiny events were held:

- **Overview:** A workshop in December 2016 provided Councillors with a detailed overview of how School Admission arrangements were administered in Bristol.
- **Scrutiny:** An Inquiry Day provided a forum for community stakeholders and school representatives to present their views on the school admission arrangements in Bristol.

Following the events the People Scrutiny Commission proposes the following five recommendations:

Recommendation 1. Strengthen Bristol City Council's oversight of Admissions through an Annual update:

- a. Scrutiny to review school admissions information annually and submit a report which tracks the inquiry day recommendations, to the Executive Board.
- b. It is recommended that the update is presented to scrutiny in late May/early June so observations can be included in the comments section of the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) annual report.
- c. An annual meeting with key school representatives and the Council should be set up to review the annual report.
- d. The report should include information on the percentage pupil premium intake in each Bristol school to present to schools for consideration.



Recommendation 2. Councillors recommend that the Mayor:

- a. meets with Principals and Chairs of Academy Boards, that have a catchment area that extends beyond Bristol, to discuss increasing the percentage of places reserved for Bristol pupils
- b. requires all new or expanding schools, which receive capital investment from Bristol City Council, to prioritise Bristol pupils as part of their admission criteria.

Recommendation 3. Officers to work with Councillors and community groups to strengthen advice and support available for parents on admissions processes, building on the successful Health Champions model in Public Health (Appendix 1 provides an outline of Health Champions). Councillors should actively encourage parents / carers to use all three of their preference choices and include a local school.

Recommendation 4. Councillors recommend that the Mayor endorses a campaign, to include social media, faith groups and City Partners, to recruit more Black and Minority Ethnicity members on BCC Appeals Panels

Recommendation 5. Request the Mayor, Councillors and City Partners take opportunities to promote Bristol schools and offer targeted support for under-subscribed schools, for example Councillors and City Partners could:

- a. Meet with Head teachers and attend school open days
- b. Promote local business links
- c. Become a school governor.
- d. Share key achievements and improvements in individual schools

2.1 Background and context

As the Local Education Authority (LEA) Bristol City Council has legal roles and responsibilities which include:

- Ensuring sufficient school places are available
- Reducing surplus places by closing or reorganising schools
- Assessing and providing home to school transport
- Providing support services for schools
- Assisting the government in implementing initiatives and legislation relating to schools, children and families
- Allocating finance to schools to act as the admission authority for Community and Controlled schools and the coordinating authority for all schools.

In previous years the majority of schools were state funded and were accountable to the Local Authority. Since the Academies Act 2010 the number of academies in Bristol has increased dramatically. Academy schools are directly funded by the Department for Education and independent of local authority control. Academies are run by academy trusts and do not have to follow the national curriculum. They have greater freedom to set their own term times and admission arrangements. If a parent/carers has been refused a place for their child at a preferred



school they have the right to appeal against the decision of the Admission Authority. Academies can choose to administer their own school appeals. Appendix A provides an explanation of some key terms.

Bristol City Council works with partner organisations, including Academies as part of the Bristol Learning City partnership. The main aims of the Partnership are to:

- champion learning as a way to transform lives, communities, organisations and the city; we want everyone to be proud to learn throughout their lives
- take responsibility for learning across the city, to tackle the systemic challenges that lead to inequality, by sharing our expertise, targeting our resources and taking collective action to add value to the work we do individually
- realise a shared vision, deliver change and make a greater impact

2.2 Bristol Data

[The Integrated Education & Capital Strategy \(2015-2019\)](#) Published September 2015 (Revised January 2016) provides the following Bristol data:

Primary Schools	Secondary Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 108 settings with primary age children in the city • 45 are designated as Academies • 6 are Trust Schools organised into two hubs • 2 are Free Schools • 25 are Faith schools (13 Church of England and 12 Catholic) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22 settings for secondary age children in the city • 18 are designated as Academies • 1 is a Foundation Trust forming part of the South East Co-operative Trust and • 2 are Voluntary Aided schools (one Church of England and one Catholic). • 16 schools use geographical catchment as part of their admission criteria • 6 schools use other admission criteria, i.e. faith or random allocation

Bristol is a multicultural city with a population of 449,328 (2015) of which 83,800 are children: almost 19% of the population. There are 34 Wards in Bristol and the age profile in each Ward varies significantly. Wards where more than a ¼ of the population are under 16 are Lawrence Hill (27%), Filwood (26%) and Withywood (25%)

3. Scrutiny planning

Councillor Brenda Massey, Chair of the People Scrutiny Commission and Councillor Claire Hiscott, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills met with a steering group of Councillors, the Service Director for Education and Skills and Officers from the Bristol City Council School Admissions team to agree the remit of the work and to plan the scrutiny activity.



Councillors had a multitude of questions about the admission process and it was agreed that a briefing would be required to provide Councillors with a detailed overview of school admission arrangements. This would provide Councillors with an overview of admission arrangements in Bristol.

Discussions highlighted anecdotal evidence received from residents which suggested that the admission arrangements were more challenging for some communities in Bristol. Councillors agreed it was important for stakeholders from the community to input into the discussion to ensure all views were captured.

The steering group agreed the following key areas which required further clarification:

Issue	Key questions to be considered
A. The school admissions application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is the process in Bristol accessible to all communities? • What are the challenges faced by Bristol families? • Why are some applications received late? • Are more late applications received from Black and Minority Ethnicity (BME) families? • How many children are allocated a preference choice?
B. The Admissions criteria of schools in Bristol	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools who set their own admission criteria are required to consult on the proposals. Does Bristol City Council contribute or challenge as part of this process?
C. Pupil composition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do schools reflect the communities where they are located in terms of ethnicity and numbers of children eligible for pupil premium?
D. Alternative approaches to school admission arrangements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do neighbouring Local Authorities and other Core Cities approach school admissions? • What are the advantages and disadvantages of community schools versus schools with wider catchments areas?

Due to the complexity of the issue it was agreed that two scrutiny events would be required:

i. Councillor workshop – December 2016

The workshop aimed to:

- ◆ Provide Councillors with an in-depth knowledge about School Admission arrangements in Bristol. The information provided at the workshop would assist Councillors to support and sign post constituents and manage public expectations prior, during and after the admissions process.
- ◆ Provide the knowledge required for the Inquiry Day, including information on the Local Authority's strategic responsibilities.

The outcome of the workshop would shape the planning of an Inquiry Day.



ii. Inquiry Day – February 2017

The aim of the event was to receive information from external representatives;

- ◆ to receive information from community groups on their experiences of school admission arrangements
- ◆ to receive information about school admission arrangement from school representatives.

The event would provide a forum for Councillors to ask questions and at the end of the Inquiry Day Councillors would reflect on the information received and consider if any recommendations should be made to the Mayor and Cabinet.

4. Overview of the events:

4.1 The Workshop

A workshop is an informal meeting which could be used for a variety of purposes, in this case to provide detailed information on a specific subject and to act as a forum for Councillors to ask questions ahead of a further scrutiny event.

The internal workshop was delivered by Bristol City Council Officers from the School Admissions team who used a combination of presentations and group discussions to provide a detailed overview of the school place planning and admission process in Bristol. The workshop provided a forum for Officers to challenge pre-conceptions and ‘myth bust’. Councillors were able to ask in-depth and technical questions related to the school admission process.

The workshop was held on the 19th December 2016 and 23 Councillors attended. Officers from the Home to School Transport and Education Welfare teams were also invited to attend.

3.1 Background Information

A preparation pack of information was circulated to Councillors prior to the workshop this included:

- A programme for the workshop and background information about Scrutiny (appendix 2a)
- Bristol data, including information about school appeals (appendix 2b)
- Public documents including:
 - [The Integrated Education & Capital Strategy \(2015-2019\)](#)
 - [A guide for Parents and Carers on applying for a Primary School Place](#)
 - [A guidance Parents and Carers on applying for a Secondary School Place](#)
 - [The School Admission Code](#)
 - [The School Admission Appeals Code](#)
 - [Information about Trading with Schools](#)



In order to ensure the workshop provided the information Councillors required a survey was circulated prior to the workshop. 13 out of 70 Councillors completed the survey (18%). The survey indicated that the level of Councillor case work related to school admission was low. Appendix 3 provides a summary of the survey results.

3.2 Presentations and discussion overview

Presentations and notes from the workshop are appended to this report (appendix 4). Following the presentation the following headline information was noted in relation to the key areas initially outlined:

A. The school admissions application process

- ◆ The School admission team work to capacity and deal with 6000 primary age and 4000 secondary age children plus in year admissions.
- ◆ The team participate in proactive outreach work with all communities which aimed to ensure information about school admissions processes and deadlines were widely known. Outreach work would be targeted, based on where late applications were received the previous year. The team work pro-actively and suggestions for further outreach activities would be welcomed.
- ◆ Information about pupil ethnicity cannot legally be requested as part of the application process so it would not be possible to know if there are higher rates of late applications by people when English is a second language.
- ◆ The Wards with the highest number of late applications (21 to 33) in September 2016 were Southmead, Lawrence Hill, Filwood, Hartcliffe & Withywood.
- ◆ In March 2016, 92.5 % of preferences were met for Bristol Schools. The majority of young people not offered a preference school applied for schools which allocated places by random allocation, were outside Bristol, or were faith schools.
- ◆ Councillors referred to anecdotal evidence which suggested that children from a BME background were less likely to be offered a preference choice school. Current data collection techniques would make it challenging to obtain information on ethnicity and preference choice school. The information could be ascertained but would require a data specialist officer to be assigned to the task. The school admissions team would shortly be moving to a new database which should make data more accessible.

B. The Admissions criteria of schools in Bristol

- ◆ Academies are their own admissions authority and must meet all the mandatory provision of [the School Admissions Code \(the Code\)](#).
- ◆ BCC generally has a strong relationship with most of the schools and works collaboratively when possible.
- ◆ Analysing academy admission arrangements in detail would not be a priority – there were currently no resources for this function.



C. Pupil composition

A variety of data was provided to Members as part of the information pack, including;

- ◆ An overview of each secondary school which included the number of children receiving free school meals, pupil premium and ethnic background
- ◆ A map showing the numbers of children living in income deprived households
- ◆ A graph showing Ethnicity of Secondary School Pupils based on pupil numbers

D. Alternative approaches to school admission arrangements

Information was provided on the legislative framework which outlined how Local Authorities administer school admission arrangements. Councillors discussed the advantages and disadvantages of community schools versus schools with wider catchments areas.

Further information on alternative approach was provided as part of the Inquiry Day.

3.3. Outcomes

The following key priorities and actions were identified:

i. Diversifying the school appeals panel

It was recognised that the school appeals panels were not reflective of the Bristol population. In order to address this, residents from non white British backgrounds should be encouraged to apply for the role of school appeal panel member. The job advert would be sent to all Councillors to be circulated to community groups and additional support could be provided with the application process.

ii. Supporting Local Schools

The high performing schools that allocate randomly were in high demand. Parents were recommended to always select a local school as one of their preferences as relying on getting a place in the highest performing schools, which might issue places based on random allocation or be located a significant distance away, would be a risky approach.

Although the school admission team provided parents / carers with this information it was sometimes not understood which caused confusion and frustration. Councillors should build strong links with local schools in their community, i.e. regularly visiting the school / attending school events and considering becoming a School Governor. Local schools should be championed with residents. Schools in Bristol have improved and Councillors should challenge lingering reputational misconceptions, encouraging residents to include local schools as a preference.

iii. Supporting residents

Councillors could offer support to residents prior to the admission deadlines, sign posting residents to the support that's available and assisting residents with their application forms.



3.4 Conclusion

The workshop provided contextual information that Councillors could use to support residents. Councillors praised the School Admissions team who worked hard to meet the needs of residents and were pro-active in addressing issues when possible. The team worked closely with schools and were targeting outreach work in areas with high numbers of late applications.

Councillors outlined expectations for the Inquiry Day which included the following requests:

- ◆ Information and evidence from school representatives and community stakeholders.
- ◆ Information from other Local Authorities – including neighbouring Local Authorities and other Core Cities.

4.1 The Inquiry Day

An Inquiry Day is a focussed, structured one-off event consisting of presentations and group work which engages a range of members, officers, community and partner representatives, and other stakeholders to take an overview of a particular issue and provide a forum for questioning invited speakers and witnesses etc.

The Inquiry Day took place on the 3rd February 2017. The event focussed on secondary school admissions and received information from community stakeholders and secondary school representatives. All Bristol secondary schools and a range of community groups were invited to attend. The Clifton Diocese, who were unable to send a representative, submitted information prior to the meeting (appendix 5).

A programme and supporting information was circulated prior to the inquiry day (appendix 6).

4.2 Information from Community Stakeholders

The following community stakeholders attended:

- ◆ Abdul Ahmed, Said Burale and Hanna Ahmed - The Somali Forum
- ◆ Christine Townsend – former Mayoral Candidate (May 2016) - additional information (appendix 7a) and presentation (appendix 7b)
- ◆ Peninah Achieng-Kindberg and Sauda Kyalambuka - African Voices Forum
- ◆ Nimo Ibrahim and Iman Abdi - The Bristol Somali Women's Group
- ◆ Abdul Jama – Bristol Education Welfare Service, Bristol City Council

Each stakeholder presented information on their experience of school admissions in Bristol and there was also a question and answer session (see appendix 8 for notes from meeting).



4.3 **Headline issues**

a. **Representatives from the Somali community**

- ◆ The information provided suggested the community experienced an inconsistent approach to admissions and school places were not allocated to children, even when they lived very near the school.
- ◆ Sometimes children were not allocated places at the same school as their siblings.
- ◆ Home schooling was popular within the Somali community, largely due to children being allocated schools not chosen as a preference.
- ◆ Better education would be the best tool to alleviate deprivation and the challenges facing BME communities.

b. **Christine Townsend** (see additional information – appendix 7a and 7b)

- ◆ Information was presented which suggested that Bristol operated a two tier system which disproportionately favoured the more affluent areas: high achieving schools in disadvantaged areas had wide catchment areas (which allocated randomly) which meant local children missed out. Conversely, less well achieving schools tended to have plenty of places available for the local community. The approach should be consistent across the City to ensure fairness and each school should be required to take an equal share of the children from lower socio economic backgrounds.

c. **African Voices Forum**

- ◆ Information was presented which suggested that some schools had low expectations of certain demographics and aspirations matched accordingly.
- ◆ Some members of the community were reluctant to choose certain schools due to the lack of diversity and the perception that bullying would take place.
- ◆ Accountability needed to be built in with equality at the heart of the system not just as a side measure.
- ◆ School access and support for newly arrived refugees and immigrants needed to be addressed.

d. **Bristol Somali Women's Group**

- ◆ The information provided suggested that schools were actively limiting entry of children from the Somali community. Many families were not allocated a preference choice and given a place at an alternative, local school.
- ◆ Some community members had been discouraged from applying to certain schools: phone calls had been disconnected because the phone operator was presumably unable to understand the accent of the caller.

e. **Abdul Jama - Bristol Education Welfare Service, Bristol City Council**

- ◆ The information presented highlighted the good work of the school admissions team: in year applications took maximum of 2 weeks to process. In comparison, some Schools took weeks to confirm if a place was available which often caused difficulties for parents.



- ◆ The process for finding school places for children who were asylum seekers had improved for year 7 and below. Finding places for year 8 onwards was more challenging because the schools would be required to provide more resources to support these children.

f. Anecdotal evidence

- ◆ Councillors referred to other anecdotal evidence which could discourage parents / carers from applying to certain schools:
 - a) the high cost of school uniforms (the requirement to set up direct debits)
 - b) the cost of mandatory music lessons.

4.4 Representatives from Schools

All secondary schools in Bristol were invited to attend with a cross section across the city invited to provide an overview of the schools approach to admissions. The admissions criteria for each school that attended the inquiry day were provided to Councillors prior to the meeting (hyperlinks included below).

The following representatives attended:

- ◆ Ms Jo Butler, Head teacher – [Cotham School](#)
- ◆ Mr Alistair Perry , Executive Principal – [Colston’s Girls’ School](#) (Presentation – appendix 9a)
- ◆ Mr Graham Diles , Deputy Head – [Saint Mary Redcliffe and Temple School](#) (Presentation – appendix 9b)
- ◆ Ms Keziah Featherstone, Head teacher - [Bridge Learning Campus](#)
- ◆ Mr Rupert Moreton, Vice Principal – [Bristol Cathedral Choir School](#) (Appendix 9C - Additional information was requested and subsequently provided on Music Specialists/Choristers)
- ◆ Ms Janice Callow representing [Fairfield School](#) (late addition - not on the programme).

Each School provided a comprehensive overview of the school admission arrangements, including the ethos of the school and any challenges the school faced.

4.4 Headline issues

a. Catchment areas and school admission arrangements

- ◆ When some independent schools converted to academies the admission catchment area and admission arrangements were specifically designed to draw learners back into Bristol at a time when children were leaving the City in large numbers. This approach was supported by the Local Authority at the time. The arrangements also aimed to limit the impact on other, less well achieving, local schools. Bristol schools have become more popular which has increased the pressure on school places. This has resulted in calls for the arrangements to be reviewed.

b. Reputational challenges

- ◆ Anecdotal evidence suggests that some primary school teachers have advised parents to avoid certain secondary schools. This adds to the challenge for schools to overcome lingering reputational issues.



- ◆ In situations where children have been allocated a place at a school that neither the parents nor the child has chosen it presents challenges for the school. Councillors were asked to provide support by promoting local schools in the community.

c. Understanding of the deadline requirements

- ◆ For schools that require additional information or a non-verbal reasoning test this information would be required by the admission deadline. For example:
 - Colstons Girls School allocates places using set proportions for different ability bands. This requires children to take a non-verbal reasoning test and a child cannot be allocated a place at the school unless a test has been taken. So even if a child would have been eligible for a place, i.e. they applied on time and a sibling already attends the school, they cannot be allocated a place if the test has not been completed if the school is oversubscribed.

e. Schools response to issues highlighted by the community stakeholders

- ◆ The Schools referred to work within communities which supports parents / carers during the admission process. Schools participated in outreach work, i.e. visiting primary schools.
- ◆ The schools were unaware of some of the issues highlighted but were committed to addressing the issues raised, specifically from the Somali community who felt they faced discrimination.
- ◆ Schools within Bristol worked collaboratively: there are strong links and co-operation.

f. The approach to school admissions in other Local Authority areas (appendix 10)

Information was provided on some alternative approaches to school admissions from Brighton & Hove, Hackney, Oldbury, Bradford, Burnley and Birmingham. The other Core Cities were contacted and information on alternative approaches requested.

Councillors were asked to consider the implications on Home to School Transport costs on possible changes to policy. Officers highlighted that although a small number of schools in other areas have policies that claim to prioritise children eligible for Free School meals there was little evidence available to show how these policies were applied in practice.

4.5 Conclusion

Councillors reflected on the wealth of information provided.

Conclusions:

- The School Admissions team were administering the process professionally and efficiently within the legislation and the Councils policies.
- The Inquiry Day highlighted issues within certain community groups which indicated that information was still not being communicated effectively in some instances. Targeted community work is recommended.
- BCC worked well with schools in Bristol, including academies. BCC should use these good relationships to suggest that Bristol residents should receive priority places at Bristol



schools. Liaison would be recommended with Principals and the Academy Board Chairs to look at catchment areas.

- More work should take place to increase the diversity of school appeals panels.
- Councillors should support local schools and work pro-actively to challenge reputational inaccuracies.

At the conclusion of the meeting the following recommendations were suggested:

- Scrutiny to regularly monitor the admission arrangements, i.e. annual report / admission board or forum
- Further work with schools who are expanding or new schools to ensure the admission policies meet the needs of the children in the area
- Councillors to support schools by building links and promoting schools to the community.

A steering group of Councillors subsequently met and expanded the recommendations.

The People Scrutiny Commission then agreed a final set of recommendations and these will be referred to the Mayor and Cabinet for consideration.

Recommendation 1. Strengthen Bristol City Council’s oversight of Admissions through an Annual update:

- Scrutiny to review school admissions information annually and submit a report which tracks the inquiry day recommendations, to the Executive Board.
- It is recommended that the update is presented to scrutiny in late May/early June so observations can be included in the comments section of the Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) annual report.
- An annual meeting with key school representatives and the Council should be set up to review the annual report.
- The report should include information on the percentage pupil premium intake in each Bristol school to present to schools for consideration.

Recommendation 2. Councillors recommend that the Mayor:

- meets with Principals and Chairs of Academy Boards, that have a catchment area that extends beyond Bristol, to discuss increasing the percentage of places reserved for Bristol pupils
- requires all new or expanding schools, which receive capital investment from Bristol City Council, to prioritise Bristol pupils as part of their admission criteria.

Recommendation 3. Officers to work with Councillors and community groups to strengthen advice and support available for parents on admissions processes, building on the successful Health Champions model in Public Health (Appendix 1 provides an outline of Health Champions). Councillors should actively encourage parents / carers to use all three of their preference choices and include a local school.



Recommendation 4. Councillors recommend that the Mayor endorses a campaign, to include social media, faith groups and City Partners, to recruit more Black and Minority Ethnicity members on BCC Appeals Panels

Recommendation 5. Request the Mayor, Councillors and City Partners take opportunities to promote Bristol schools and offer targeted support for under-subscribed schools, for example Councillors and City Partners could:

- a. Meet with Head teachers and attend school open days
- b. Promote local business links
- c. Become a school governor.
- d. Share key achievements and improvements in individual schools

5. Next Steps

The report and recommendations to be referred to the Mayor and Cabinet for consideration.



Appendices:

Appendix	Title
1	Overview of Community Health Champions
1a	Explanation of some key terms
2a	A programme for the workshop and background information about Scrutiny
2b	Bristol data, including information about school appeals
3	Councillor survey results
4	Presentations and notes from the workshop
5	Clifton Diocese submission
6	Inquiry Day Programme and supporting information
7a	Information submitted by Christine Townsend
7b	Presentation submitted by Christine Townsend
8	Inquiry Day notes
9a	Presentation provided by Mr Alistair Perry , Executive Principal – Colston’s Girls’ School
9b	Presentation provided by Mr Graham Diles, Deputy Head – St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School
9c	Additional information provided by Bristol Cathedral Choir School
10	Information from other Local Authorities and from Core Cities



Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

31st August 2017



Report of: Andrea Dell, Service Manager – Democratic Engagement

Title: Scrutiny Ways of Working – Operations

Ward: Citywide

Officer Presenting Report: Andrea Dell, Service Manager – Democratic Engagement

Contact Telephone Number: 0117 92 24836

Recommendation

That OSMB members discuss and agree the proposed operational arrangements for the trial of the new ways of working for Scrutiny in Bristol. This includes details of managing the work programme, managing the task and finish groups, chairing of the task and finish groups and communication amongst others.

Summary

A full report is to follow providing a draft 'operation manual' for Scrutiny.

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

31st August 2017



Report of: Andrea Dell, Service Manager – Democratic Engagement

Title: Scrutiny Working Programme

Ward: Citywide

Officer Presenting Report: Andrea Dell, Service Manager – Democratic Engagement

Contact Telephone Number: 0117 92 24836

Recommendation

That OSMB members provide a brief verbal update for the webcast and members present on the latest work on the task and finish groups and their proposed next steps.

Summary

The position at the last OSMB meeting in July 2017 is documented on the page overleaf



	Live Topic	Timing/priority	Comments
1	Libraries	To progress now	Needs to start asap to in order that final recommendations dovetail with Cabinet proposals to be produced for Cabinet on 9/1/17. First meeting to be arranged for early/mid-September. Likely to be working group.
2	Parks	To progress now	Needs to start asap, ideally with scene setting meeting prior to launch of public consultation in September. First meeting to be arranged for early/mid-September. Likely to involve inquiry day.
3	Children's Centres	To be revisited at a later stage	Consultation currently being designed for public autumn launch – OSM to receive update from Anna Keen when something to report
4	MTFP	Has already met *	Working group likely to meet again in the Autumn * Consideration as to whether this group will lead on budget scrutiny
5A	Reducing Demand on Social Services – Adults	September (scoping session)	Longer term topic – further work to confirm to confirm methodology for this
5B	Reducing Demand on Social Services – Children	September (scoping session)	Longer term topic – further work to confirm to confirm methodology for this
6	Fire Safety in Tower Blocks	To be revisited at a later stage	Need to await issue of government post-Grenfell recommendations.
7	Cribbs Patchway New Neighbourhoods	Sept/Oct	Timing TBC but Members are keen to engage in the process ASAP – further work required with Legal and Cabinet lead to avoid duplication. Likely to be a working group that meets periodically.
8	Commissioning and Contracts	September	Scrutiny of processes before a deeper dive into social services contracts (need to align with items 5 & 6)
9	Air Quality	August /September	August 2017 – All Member Briefing. Followed by scrutiny working group engagement with

			Officers prior to 15 th August Cabinet Report 'Clean Air Action Plan and Clean Air Zone Feasibility Study' – scrutiny working group to feed-into and / or challenge report.
10	Council Assets	October	Member briefing scheduled for end of August.
11	Youth Council – not intended to be a T&F group	To be revisited at a later stage	Scrutiny Officer to speak to Lead Members and Martin James about timing