

BRISTOL

LEARNING CITY

Minutes / Action Notes
Learning City Partnership Board Meeting
21 September 2020

Attendees, Board members:

David Barrett, University of the West of England
Andy Forbes, University of West of England
Alison Hurley, Service Director Education & Skills
Jon Angel, Bristol Secondary Heads teachers' and Principals Association
Esther Deans, Chair Race Equality in Education
Darren Ewings, Co Chair Bristol Special Schools Partnership
Jo Hill, Co Chair Bristol Special Schools Partnership
Tom Sperlinger, University of Bristol

Apologies:

Councillor Anna Keen, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Siena Jackson-Wolfe, Youth Mayor BCC
Jacqui Jensen, Executive Director ACE
Sandra Meadows, VOSCUR
Aidid Mohamed, Youth Mayor BCC

Other attendees:

Thomas Jarvis, Education Partnerships and Programme Manager
Claudette Campbell, Democratic Services Officer

1 WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Alison Hurley extend apologies from Cllr Anna Keen and took the Chair.

The following apologies were noted:

- Jacqui Jackson
- Sandra Meadows
- Youth Mayors

2 REFLECTIONS ON THE PAST 6 MONTHS

Invited members to reflect on the impact of COVID19 in their setting.

Discuss the future of the Board and its role and engagement with the One City Plan.

The LA in the preceding 6 months:

- COVID 19 impact of the service; it has dominated time and focus whilst the authority continues to focus on the issues of safeguarding , attendance and the needs of the most vulnerable.
- Continues to meet the expectations set out by Ofsted that we keep centred on those vulnerable and vulnerable communities.
- The LA is progressing well with the work to meet the SEND milestones and to deliver on the targets set out in the statement of action. The service continues to forecasts for the next few terms on matters pertaining to vulnerability; inclusion; inequality; post 16 offer.

Board Members provided an overview of the position settings during the lockdown;

Andy Forbes, Principal and Chief Executive City of Bristol College

- The setting continued to manage the ongoing situation making adaptations to its service provision. Moving service deliver to on-line provision; staff had worked throughout the summer months; alternative arrangements devised and implemented; that there were many unknowns; consideration had to be given to the impact of the virus on the setting for an extend period of time and at same time plan for next intake; the need to manage staff wellbeing and exposure to the virus; that the teaching staff had been positive and worked hard to maintain service which in turn encouraged the whole team to move forward.

David Barrett, University West of England

- The teaching day had been extended to accommodate students and this impacted staff who have to extend their working day to facilitate the new structure; the move to online teaching had exposed the issue of digital poverty; that other areas of development have slowed or have been parked because of the time needed to manage delivering the core business; that there were many courses that still require specialist equipment and facilities that had to be delivered in a classroom setting.

Jo Hill, Co Chair Bristol Special Schools Partnership

- Was impressed with the resilience of staff across all settings; the difficulty faced by teaching staff waiting for coronavirus test & results; that it was important to consider those students with medical needs that are vulnerable to the virus.

Darrew Ewings, Co Chair Bristol Special Schools Partnership

- Specialist Schools faced additional pressures with all children on roll classed as vulnerable; reiterated the concerns about the testing system and its impact on staffing levels; that the service had the additional burden of working to ensure that it meets all legal requirements in respect of its care and service provision.

Esther Deans, Chair Race Equality in Education

- The climate in which schools now operate is now impacted by those students looking to settings to change in line with the principles brought to the public attention as a result of the Black Lives Matter campaign. That all continue to prepare as they are looking at an unknown future with regards to the progress of the coronavirus. That the impact on Black & Asian communities are being documented and all must be aware of the widening gap between black and white students which is further impacted by the racism arising from the situation with Brexit.

Tom Sperlinger, University of Bristol

- Applauded the heroism of all staff who in addition to working elongated hours have to care for the mental health wellbeing of students; settings have the overall responsibility to care and consider the similar mental health wellbeing of its staff; noted the impact on those students both young and mature, with caring responsibilities; noted the creation of networking opportunities and the creation of resources on line to support the transition to online learning. Asked if there was a way for settings two work together to create something for the benefit of all who are facing similar issues.

Jon Angel, Bristol Secondary Heads & Principals Association

- Endorsed the sentiments above acknowledging the resilience of staff who are managing a situation which is not in their control; working with conflicting government guidance; having to review strategies and adapting to change whilst students are in place; concerns arising from having achievements of students being centre assessed which in the longer term may mask the gap in achievement amongst vulnerable groups; concerns about students accessing the right courses at 6th form level and how they move between courses that do not meet their needs.

3 MOVING FORWARD

The Role of the Board

The Chair, shared the contents of a letter from the Mayor with the Board that read:

Dear Learning City Partnership Members

At today's session I understand you are talking about some of the changes occurring to the One City structure. I wanted to personally write and set out some of the thinking behind these proposals – and most importantly to thank you for your work to date and your ongoing support for education and lifelong learning in the city.

The current iteration/structure of One City was formed in January 2019 and it has always been our intention to review and evolve as it becomes more embedded in the city. These draft proposals have been discussed with the Chair Cllr Anna Keen but I am keen to hear your feedback as well.

As announced at the City Gathering in June, we are going to be setting up a Children and Young People's Board. This is in the early stages of development and will be chaired by Cllr Helen Godwin. This board will focus holistically on the experiences of children and young people in the city. While children and young people were featured across many of the themes of the One City Plan, specifically in terms of education and schooling in the LCP theme, it was felt that more concentrated focus was required, and this was echoed by Ofsted.

A Shadow Young People's board, formed of young people drawn from across different communities in the city, will also be created to inform the board's direction and ensure young people are at the heart of its decision-making.

To avoid a proliferation of themes across the One City Plan, we are proposing that the learning and skills theme then be embedded across the new children's theme and the economy theme. This will link schools and young people's education closer to the wider children's agenda in the city as well as linking education and learning with the economic work in the city. We feel this link is vital given the impact of COVID-19 on the economy. In effect this will mean the LCP will work closely with the two boards to ensure learning is a core thread throughout both those themes but will not have its own individual theme in the plan.

I want to be clear that I view this as a way of embedding learning much more closer with the economic and children's work in the city and see this a way to enable that much further.

To ensure that skills remains a key priority, the economy strand will be labelled Economy and Skills to maintain the profile of learning and skills.

I am eager to hear your reflections on this and welcome your feedback.

A discussion followed on the role of the board and how best to define the board's remit; Which position should it take that of Governance or Operational or Project Board or Oversight on key agenda issues.

The following was noted from the discussion that followed:

- a) Action Plan: The Board may consider crafting a detailed action plan which focusses on key deliverables. That should incorporate actions required to drive progress of students across the City. To map the work what is currently done by stakeholders across the City to avoid duplication.

- b) The role of the board must be achievable and those aspirations identified must be those that it can support to ensure delivery.
- c) Steering Group: All were reminded that with existing priorities arising from working within members own settings; together with the additional pressures arising from the new era of covid19 resilience & mitigation work; the board could move to the position of a steering group as the best way to utilise resources and influences, to identify quick wins. For example the issue of digital poverty. The Board must develop SMART Strategies.
- d) Holding others to account may not be achievable but if the Board had a mandate as a steering group, in instances where the majority of settings were their own authority, it would enable the sharing of information without the added burden of having to meet fixed priorities.
- e) University Settings: How to take into consideration students individual circumstances to increase access to higher education from diverse groups; to look at policy issues that create obstacles to students achieving their ambition.
- f) Policies often create a barrier to inclusion; the students the board services are not part of the conversation their voices should be reflected in any policy or strategy change.

The Chair concluded the discussion thanking those in attendance; noting that the discussion tended to lean towards the Board adopting a Steering Group remit that created pace behind strategy; that the refreshed framework should have clear priorities incorporating the voice of young people.

Action:

1. Further comments to be provided to TJ
2. AH & TJ to repurpose and present to the Board

The Meeting Closed at 6.00 pm