

Bristol City Council
Minutes of the Adults, Children and Education
Scrutiny Commission (previously People Scrutiny
Commission)



25 March 2019 at 4.00 pm

Members Present:-

Councillors: Claire Hiscott (Chair), Jos Clark, Eleanor Combley, Jude English, Paul Goggin, Gill Kirk, Brenda Massey, Celia Phipps, Ruth Pickersgill and Steve Smith

Other Members Present: Cllr Anna Keen

1. Welcome, Introduction and Safety Information

The Chair welcomes everyone to the meeting

2. Apologies for Absence and Substitutions

Apologies from Cllr Johnson

3. Declarations of Interest

No declarations of Interest

4. Minutes of Previous Meeting

To be agreed at next meeting

5. Chair's Business

The Chair raised that she would like to make a proposal that Air Quality is on the work programme for the People Scrutiny Commission in the next Municipal year from a Public Health viewpoint. The Chair



referenced the inquest into the death of Ella Kissi-Debrah in Lewisham. Commission Members supported this and requested that Scrutiny take a broad, cross cutting view of the issue.

6. Public Forum

No Public Forum Received

7. School Places - Provision, Expansion and Admissions

Members were presented with a report which explained that all pupils requiring a Year 7 place for September 2019 were offered a school place on 1 March 2019 with 72% offered their 1st preference school and 90% offered one of their 3 preferences. The report also outlined that demand for places at primary schools is now falling however there is a rising demand for secondary school places which has required the expansion of existing schools and the need to open new schools. The discussion was as follows:

- The Officer clarified that School providers are identified through a public procurement process and follow the public procurement rules. The Council develop the specifications for these tenders.
- The Officer confirmed that school admissions liaise with the Planning Department to predict likely school admission numbers. This was in relation to a question regarding housing expansion in North Bristol. The Cabinet member clarified that a formula is used to predict how many school children will need places by the size of the homes being built. It was also noted that as house building is related to economic activity the practicalities of this can be difficult.
- Officer confirmed that school building is currently on schedule.
- Officer confirmed we have the capacity to offer all children a school place in Bristol who would like a school place. It was confirmed that this is not 100% of all school aged children in Bristol as some children choose to move out of area or into the private sector for school places.
- A Commission member requested data around the 10% of children who are not offered any of their 3 preferences. Do we have information regarding their ward or ethnicity and how is 10% comparable to other key cities. Officers confirmed that work is being done by the Admissions team to improve parents' understanding of the admission criteria. This included the team visiting primary schools and working directly with parents to improve applications. Work is also being done with schools which have traditionally not been very popular. This work has resulted in one particular school moving from under PAN to PAN this year.

Resolved: The information in this report was noted

8. Schools Performance Report



Members were presented with a report from Officers detailing the Education Performance Outcomes for 2018. The report outlines that overall Education Outcomes are improving in Bristol however overall attainment in Bristol is still marginally behind the National average. This discussion was as follows:

- There are 4 significant achievement gaps for key groups (disadvantaged, SEND, BME and boys) identified in the report. The Officer confirmed that these are a National issue however this is an identified issue in Bristol and despite work having been done the gap has not narrowed. Some LA's have had greater success narrowing these gaps and Bristol is continuing to do work in this area.
- Officer confirmed that the gender gap continues right up until GCSE, particularly in English and Mathematics. There is a lot of work being done in the area and a 'Boys Achieve' project is in its third year.
- Officers confirmed that improvements to SEND attainment are a key priority for the Learning City Partnership.
- Officers confirmed that there has been consultation on a significant change in the Ofsted Framework to focus on schools of low attainment. The new framework will have a greater emphasis on social justice which is aimed at benefitting the most disadvantaged children. Ofsted are also focusing on issues such as off rolling and exclusions to promote more inclusive practice.
- Commission Members expressed concern that BME (Black & Minority Ethnicities) gaps are widening and suggested that positive action was needed to invest in BME. Officers responded that the gaps correlate with the poorest schools in the city and the strategy has been focused on improving the poorest schools in the city will have a positive outcome for BME children.
- Commission Members commended the success of the Reading Recovery program and recommended that this could be looked at in more schools.
- The Commission commended the effective partnership working with schools across Bristol by the team, particularly given the limited resources.

Resolved: The information in this report was noted

9. School readiness risks and action plans

Members of the Commission were asked to take special note of the recommendation of this report which asked the Commission to support the development of a strategy working with key partners to improve outcomes for all children at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage, particularly those facing the greatest challenges. The Officer presented the report which noted that although an LGA Early Years Peer Challenge noted the quality and professionalism of early years services in Bristol, outcomes for children eligible for Free School Meals at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage are below the median nationally.



- Commission Member questioned the disparity between the good quality of settings and the poor GLD (Good Level of Development) outcomes. The Officer explained that this came down to the impact of Children Services and the stark challenges in some of the communities in Bristol.
- Commission Members commended the retention of 22 Children Centres in Bristol, the integration of teams in communities with great success was noted.
- The Officer explained that funding for two year old free childcare places has been an issue, as it has been nationally. The nurseries in the most deprived areas of the city are struggling as they often don't have access to top up funding.
- Commission Member questioned where the touch points for people coming into the city (e.g. refugees) are to encourage the take up of the free childcare entitlement for two year olds. The Officer confirmed Health is a touch point but agreed that take up of the entitlement could be encouraged through Housing also.
- Officer confirmed that the Employment and Skills team have been applying for funding from WECA but this process has been difficult.

Resolved: The information in this report was noted

10 Learning City update

Members received an update on the progress of a number of projects developed by Learning City based on partnership priorities over the past two years. The discussion was as follows:

- With wider partnership engagement, Learning City has had the opportunity to co-ordinate bids/ commissioning which has led to a more strategic commissioning approach.
- Learning city has had a presence on the international stage as result of its UNESCO status – UNESCO view the learning city approach a way of delivering sustainability goals
- Bristol is one of the few Learning Cities with UNESCO status without a free Learning Festival - Members of the Commission would welcome such a festival in Bristol.
- Officer confirms that Learning City was established by the Council and while the Learning City board is a constituted board of the Council, Bristol Learning City is governed by an Independent Partnership Board.
- The Bristol Learning City team are funded by partners. To mitigate the risk of loss of expertise in the case of staff turnover, funding is linked to roles rather than individuals. These risks are managed in the Risk Register.

Resolved: The information in this report was noted



11 Directorate Performance Report (KPI's)

Members were presented with the ACE directorate performance report for the third quarter in 2018/2019.

- Commission Member questions how KPI's are added to the dashboard and suggested that a greater focus on BME may help improve outcomes. Officer clarified that this is something that can be looked into.

Action: Commission Member to send KPI suggestion to Officer

- Commission Member asked about the decision making behind the cuts to smoking services. Officer assured the Commission that Public Health have taken an evidence based approach.
- The Winter Pressures situation has improved greatly from last year. This is in part due to better ways of working and improved partnership working on the ground.

Resolved: The information in this report was noted

12 Directorate Risk Register

Members received the extract from the Corporate Register which was relevant to the Adults, Children and Education Scrutiny Commission. The Officer explained that given the high risk nature of safeguarding, the high likelihood risk factor will never reduce. The following matters were discussed:

- Risks associated with Hate Crime are not highlighted in this report however Officer believed that they the risk would be reported to another Commission

Action: Scrutiny Officer to check if risks associated with Hate Crime are reported elsewhere

- Turnover of Social Workers is still high at 24% however Bristol is doing comparably well in relation to nearest neighbours and Core Cities. High numbers of Social Workers have been with Bristol City Council for a significant amount of years however there is a higher turnover with younger and newly qualified Social Workers. Officer commented that the cost of living in Bristol may have contributed to this.
- Work has been done regarding youth violence in East Central. Bristol is adapting the Public Health model to reduce Youth Violence as used in Glasgow. The model has also had significant success in Wales.

Resolved: The information in this report was noted

13 Bristol Hospital Education Services



This item is for information only.

Action: Commission Member to send scrutiny a question re: academic outcomes for young pregnant women.

Action: Cabinet Member to check about parking issue for Hospital Education teachers

Resolved: The information in this report was noted

Meeting ended at Time Not Specified

CHAIR _____

