

## OUTER NORTH WEST COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

MONDAY, 13TH NOVEMBER, 2023

**PRESENT:** Councillor E Thomson in the Chair

Councillors B Anderson, P Alderson,  
C Anderson, E Bromley, C Campbell,  
R Downes, B Flynn, O Edwards and  
R Jones

### 25 **APPEALS AGAINST REFUSAL OF INSPECTION OF DOCUMENTS**

There were no appeals against refusal of inspection of documents.

### 26 **EXEMPT INFORMATION - POSSIBLE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

There were no exempt items.

### 27 **LATE ITEMS**

There were no late items.

### 28 **DECLARATION OF INTERESTS'**

The following declarations of interests were made:

- Cllr Thomson – Governor at Guiseley Primary School
- Cllr B Anderson – Governor at Holy Trinity Primary School, Cookridge.
- Cllr Downes – Governor at Rufford Park Primary School and Prince Henry's Grammar School.

### 29 **Apologies For Absence**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Garvani and Lay.

### 30 **Minutes - 11th September 2023**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> September 2023, be approved as a correct record.

#### Minute 22 – Finance Update Report

Cllr Flynn requested that it be noted he wished to disassociate himself from any comments made at the previous meeting in relation to the Wellbeing Application from West Yorkshire Police – Operation Mineral Outer North West. He had attended the meeting. but had left prior to the consideration of the Finance Update Report.

### 31 **School Place Planning Update**

The report of Head of Locality Partnerships was submitted to the Outer North West Community Committee at the specific request of Members to provide an

update on school place planning and demographics across the Outer North West.

In attendance for this item were:

- Cllr Jonathan Pryor – Executive Member for Economy, Culture and Education
- Darren Crawley – Sufficiency and Participation Lead – Children and Families
- Tracy Waud – Sufficiency and Participation Manager – Children and Families

Head Teachers and School Governors had been invited to the meeting from schools in the Outer North West area.

Before the start of this item the Chair requested a minutes' silence after the incident which had taken place in Horsforth in the previous week. The Chair said the Community Committee wished to convey their deepest condolences to Alfie's family and friends. She also wished to thank the emergency services, local schools and Ward Councillors for the support that had been provided to the family and the local community.

Cllr Pryor in his opening remarks, he said he echoed the comments of the Chair and if anyone has concerns or needed to talk about the incident in Horsforth, he said his door was always open.

Cllr Pryor in introducing the report said that the statistical impact on pupil numbers was a citywide issue. However, Aireborough was ahead of the curve and discussions were required to address the issue of school places. It was recognised that school places could fluctuate year on year, and each area has different considerations, but the issue needed to be addressed.

It was noted that one school had already agreed to reduce their Published Admission Number (PAN) and two were consulting on PAN reductions and this had been gratefully received.

The Officers outlined the headline areas as listed in the submitted report. It was noted that the data for births was the most recent from October this year and had seen a drop in the numbers of births again, the lowest since 2004.

It was noted that consultation currently focused on 2025 and that data for 2027 had not yet been projected. There was a need to meet to discuss this issue, and for discussions to include preference patterns, any planned housing in the area and to look at further PAN reductions.

The meeting opened for questions and the following information and discussions followed:

- It was acknowledged that the outer North West area bordered with Bradford and some of the schools in the area took in pupils from areas such as Apperley Bridge, Menston and Baildon. The schools raised concerns that evidence had not been provided to ensure that pupils

from outside the Leeds boundaries had been taken into consideration. It was noted that data was sourced from NHS Leeds, Leeds GP's and that data from bordering authorities was also taken into account. Officer's meet regularly with regional local authorities to share data, so they are able to forecast pupil numbers and look at trends to factor in any impact on Leeds.

- It was the view that some surplus was required, especially in Horsforth schools which could provide opportunity for smaller classes which would be better for the pupils. It was also the view that where schools are popular it often had a knock-on effect that children from a specific catchment area could not attend a school in their area and had to travel some distance to attend a school which had an impact on the environment and working patterns of parents. It was acknowledged that some of the schools in Horsforth were popular and the Local Authority works towards a 5-10% surplus across schools. However, it was difficult to forecast numbers of children moving into an area or where preference forms were not completed within timescales. It was recognised that it was a fine balance on how much surplus there was given that this could impact on funding and budgets.
- The meeting was advised that the Local Authority had few powers to reduce PAN's for schools that control their own admission arrangements they could only provide data and make recommendations to show that the process was being managed. It was noted that only the Regional Schools Commissioner who acted on behalf of the Government had powers to force the reduction of PAN's and closure of schools due to drop in numbers. The Regional Schools Commissioner can close schools without consulting, and this was why it was so important for schools and the local authority to work together to show that issues were being addressed and managed. It was noted that it was the policy of the Council's administration to work with schools.
- It was acknowledged that there was a call for new housing sites through the Site Allocations Plan (SAP) and where new housing was developed there may be a need to increase PAN's and there was a formula for when this was required.
- PAN's can be increased without a consultation process if accommodation allows for the extra children. If additional accommodation is required to build on to the school, then a consultation process would take place, which would be reported to the Council's Executive Board.
- It was recognised that the decision was a difficult one to make but officers had to look at the area as a whole. They acknowledged there were also fluctuations in-year and this was taken into account with some surplus being available. However, there may be a need for more reductions as we move forward year on year. It was the view of officers that a phased reduction works better for all and planning for this would help when considering budgets. Their recommendation would be to reduce PANs and they would offer support to head teachers.
- The Committee were informed that Leeds had a larger number of local authority schools than most, and the Regional Schools Commissioner

(RSC) does have the power to intervene where it is felt the local authority are not taking relevant action to address surplus.

- Officers meet with the Department for Education's place planning team on a quarterly basis to discuss school population, forecasts and proposed action by each planning area to address falling or growing pupil places.
- Given the proximity of Bradford to the outer North West area, Members were of the view that figures from the neighbouring authorities would be of use to Ward Councillors to aid conversations with local schools. It was noted that this information could be provided to Members.
- Head teachers were of the view that it was a difficult conversation to have with staff and governors and asked if officers would be able to attend meetings to assist with discussions. Officers said they could assist and provide data but could only make recommendations and not then make the decision for the schools. It was noted that data for the September 2024 intake would be available in February 2024. Schools would need to discuss amongst themselves as to the best course of action.
- The reduction in PAN can take up to two years as there would need to be consultation to reduce PAN.
- It was recognised that the Aireborough Learning Schools Partnership Trust worked well together, however, it was also noted that there is a wariness as schools were effectively in competition with each other.
- It was noted that as it stands currently, enough had been done so far for next year, but schools in the area need to be looking towards 2026-27.
- Members were of the view that information from neighbouring areas was required in order to allow further conversations and decisions to be made. It was recognised that the schools in the Aireborough area were well placed to allow children to be able to walk to school but there was a need to be ready for when and if changes were required to numbers.
- It was noted that there was still time for schools to consult on PAN reductions for 2025 if they wished the consultation being for 6 weeks between 1st October to 31 January. Consultation to reduce PAN's for 2026 would begin next Autumn 2024.
- Teaching staff had raised concerns during the meeting about the accuracy of the data provided and although it was acknowledged it was not an exact science there was a need for improved accuracy. It was noted that the biggest deviation for forecasting numbers was parental preference, which can change year on year. The meeting was informed that the DfE dashboard of all local authority pupil forecasts, show Leeds to be between 0.1 to 0.4% for Primary and 0.7 to 1.4% secondary school projections. Information from the NHS is much better now, and this is provided on a monthly basis. Officers were willing to speak with individual schools and discuss what they require and share information from Bradford.

The Chair and the Committee thanked all the schools for their attendance at the meeting and for the discussion.

The meeting moved on to discuss issues of school places in other areas of the outer North West including Cookridge, Adel, Bramhope and Pool.

Discussions included:

- There had been a decline in birth rate in all areas, but not as dramatic a decline as in Aireborough.
- Officers would continue to monitor the demographic in the area. It was noted that in previous years there had been a need for bulge cohorts, but there was now a slight surplus.
- It was acknowledged that the housing development in Bramhope had, resulted in a being decision taken to increase PAN at Bramhope Primary School. It was suggested that this increase at Bramhope had, had an effect on one other school in the area, namely Cookridge Holy Trinity Primary. It was the view that this could have been caused by siblings moving through the school from the previous decision to have a bulge cohort and the fact that Bramhope was a feeder school for Prince Henry's Grammar School, which was currently a popular choice for parents. It was suggested that Cookridge Holy Trinity was also a feeder school for Prince Henry's Grammar School.
- There was a request for the voluntary aided schools to receive projection data. It was noted that this information could be provided.
- The Committee was advised that Bramhope Primary School was currently seeing wait lists for admission to this school which was due to the new housing development and this school is a feeder school for Prince Henry's Grammar School which is one of the parental preferences.
- The Otley area had previously seen an increase in birth rate, and it had been forecast to increase due to a new housing development. However, the new development has not gone ahead yet, and the birth rate has since dropped. Otley is being monitored but at present the surplus in this area is currently acceptable.

Members were of the view that this meeting had been informative and requested that conversations should be ongoing with a further meeting to be arranged.

**RESOLVED** – To note the content of the report and the discussions, and for another meeting to be arranged mid-May 2024 after allocations for September 2024 were known.

### **32 Any other business**

There was a formal request that acoustics in venues for Community Committee meetings was checked as some attendees were having difficulties hearing. The Localities Team offered to check future venues.

In relation to Minute 22 Finance Update Report

The Chair suggested that in light of the incident in Horsforth Members may wish to reconsider an application submitted by West Yorkshire Police for a preventative project in relation to knife crime. Members were of the view that discussions were needed with the Police and all Ward Members to clarify what was required.

It was suggested that an invite be sent to the Police so they could attend the next meeting.

Members also requested monitoring information in relation to funded projects.

### **33 Date and Time of Next Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – To note the next Outer North West Community Committee will be on Monday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2023 at 1pm. The venue for the meeting was confirmed as Adel Memorial Hall.

*Meeting concluded at 15:20*