

## **SCRUTINY BOARD (CHILDREN AND FAMILIES)**

**WEDNESDAY, 7TH OCTOBER, 2020**

**PRESENT:** Councillor A Lamb in the Chair

Councillors H Bithell, P Drinkwater,  
B Flynn, A Forsaith, C Gruen, J Illingworth,  
J Lennox, A Marshall-Katung, K Renshaw  
and R Stephenson

### **CO-OPTED MEMBERS (VOTING)**

Mr E A Britten - Church Representative (Catholic)  
Mr A Graham - Church Representative (Church of England)  
Ms J Ward – Parent Governor Representative (Secondary)

### **CO-OPTED MEMBERS (NON-VOTING)**

Ms C Foote – Teacher Representative  
Ms H Bellamy – Teacher Representative  
Ms D Reilly – Looked After Children and Care Leavers

#### **29 Appeals Against Refusal of Inspection of Documents**

There were no appeals.

#### **30 Exempt Information - Possible Exclusion of the Press and Public**

There were no exempt items.

#### **31 Late Items**

There were no late items.

#### **32 Declaration of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests**

There were no declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests.

#### **33 Apologies for Absence and Notification of Substitutes**

Apologies were received from Councillors W Kidger and C Howley, and co-opted members Kate Blacker and Emma Holmes.

#### **34 Minutes - 9th September 2020**

**RESOLVED** – That the minutes of the meetings held on 9 September 2020 be approved as an accurate record.

## 35 Coronavirus (Covid-19) Pandemic - Response and Recovery Plan for Schools

The Director of Children and Families submitted a report that presented an update on specific requested areas of the Children and Families Services' response and recovery plan for schools, working with partners and communities, in response to the unprecedented Covid-19 pandemic.

The following documents were appended to the report:

- COVID-19 Pupil Attendance in Leeds Dashboard
- Updated advice for children and young people who have been shielding

The following were in attendance:

- Cllr Jonathan Pryor, Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Cllr Fiona Venner, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Sal Tariq, Director of Children and Families
- Sue Rumbold, Chief Officer, Partnerships and Health
- Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer, Resources and Strategy
- Val Waite, Head of Service Learning Inclusion
- Dave Clark, Head of Service Learning Improvement

The Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment introduced the report, highlighting that attendance for all pupils in Leeds during the week commencing the 14th September was 87%, and early indications suggest that this is broadly in line with England state-funded schools. As of 5<sup>th</sup> October 2020, it was reported that 29 secondary schools, 66 primary schools, and 5 specialist schools had confirmed cases of COVID-19; with a total of 5,895 pupils self-isolating due to themselves or a close connection testing positive. Members also were advised that there had been an increase in notification of parents choosing to electively home educate their child, due to concerns associated with COVID-19.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Notification of 'bubble' collapses.* Members requested that the system for notification of bubble collapses be revisited to include schools that are not located in a members ward, but the catchment area expands into their ward.
- *Monitoring missed education to identify learning gaps.* Members recognised that extensive efforts are taken by schools to ensure that remote learning packages are available should a 'bubble' have to self-isolate for 14 days, however, requested assurance that further support would be provided to pupils upon their return to school to catch-up with missed learning. Members were advised that a £650m catch up premium has been awarded to the Council, which is intended to cover

missed learning and targeted support for children and young people who need it most, equating to approximately £80 per pupil based on the October 2020 census. Additionally, a tuition programme for schools to access to provide catch-up learning will be launched in November 2020.

- *Support offered to schools.* Members reported that schools in the city have been very grateful for the extensive support and guidance they have received throughout the pandemic from Council teams, and wished to note their thanks.
- *Future arrangements for statutory examinations and tests.* There was some discussion around central governments' position on exams and other testing in the 2020/21 academic year, particularly in relation to GCSEs and A Levels, and the impact that uncertainty continues to have on pupils and teachers. Members proposed that a working group to further consider the Board's position in relation to exams and other forms of testing be arranged, and following discussions, the Chair and the Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment write to the Department for Education and Ofqual with requests for consideration moving forward.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- a) That the contents of the report, along with Members comments be noted;
- b) That a working group be arranged to discuss the future arrangements for examinations and testing in the 2020/21 academic year;
- c) That the Chair and Executive Member write to the Department for Education and Ofqual setting out the Leeds position and requests for consideration in relation to the future arrangements for examinations and testing in the 2020/21 academic year.

### **36 Revenue budget update 2021/22 and budget savings proposals**

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that presented details of the latest revenue budget update for 2021/22 and budget savings proposals, as considered by the Executive Board at its meeting on 24th September 2020.

The following were in attendance:

- Cllr Jonathan Pryor, Executive Member for Learning, Skills and Employment
- Cllr Fiona Venner, Executive Member for Children and Families
- Sal Tariq, Director of Children and Families
- Tim Pouncey, Chief Officer, Strategy and Resources
- Louise Hornsey, Head of Finance

The Chair explained that further budget savings proposals were expected to be brought to the Executive Board over the next couple of months and so all Scrutiny Boards would continue to be consulted. Linked to this, the Chair

proposed that the Children and Families Scrutiny Board holds a further working group meeting in November in order to facilitate this consultation.

The Chief Officer for Strategy and Resources provided a brief overview of the budget proposals as set out in the report.

Members discussed a number of matters, including:

- *Staffing levels.* Recognising the projected increase in demand for services due to the pandemic, Members sought assurance that staffing levels would be sufficient in light of budget savings proposals. Members were advised that additional proposals will be brought forward for consideration in coming months, however the current 'Business As Usual' approach is to support requests for early leavers where appropriate, whilst being mindful of teams under significant pressure and the impact staffing reductions on statutory responsibilities.
- *Supply teachers.* A suggestion was put forward by a Member of the Board to introduce a Council run supply teacher agency, to be used as a traded service for schools at a lower cost. Members were advised that this option would be explored further.

#### **RESOLVED –**

- a) That the contents of the report, along with Members comments, be noted.
- b) That the Board holds a further working group meeting in November to facilitate the ongoing budget consultation.

### **37 Work Schedule**

The Head of Democratic Services submitted a report that invited Members to consider the Board's Work Schedule for the remainder of the current municipal year.

A Member requested that the Board looks urgently into the safeguarding measures put in place within alternative education provision. While it was noted that such matters would link into the Board's ongoing Inquiry into Exclusions, Elective Home Education and Off-rolling, which was due to recommence in January/February 2021, the Board agreed to arrange an earlier session to seek further clarity and assurance surrounding such safeguarding matters.

**RESOLVED –** That the work schedule be updated to reflect the requests made by the Board during today's meeting.

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

Wednesday, 25th November 2020 at 10.00 am (pre-meeting for all Board Members at 9.45 am)