

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

16 MARCH 2021

PRESENT

Councillor D. Western (in the Chair).

Councillors T. Carey (Vice-Chair), J. Bennett, J. Dillon, J. Holden, S. Longden, A. New, S.B. Procter, D. Acton (ex-Officio) and Dr. K. Barclay (ex-Officio)

In attendance

Richard Roe	Corporate Director Place
Karen Samples	Director of Education Standards, Quality and Performance
Sarah Butters	Head of Early Years, School Places an Access
Anna Lomas	Strategic Lead Children in Care
Pamela Wharton	Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care

Also Present

Councillor Hynes	Executive Member for Children's Services
Councillor Carter	Lead Member for Education

APOLOGIES

11. ATTENDANCES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Miss L. Blackburn

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received

13. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no public questions received

14. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 4th Feb 2021 be approved as a correct record

15. SCHOOL PLACES

The Committee considered a report of the Director of Education Standards, Quality and Performance which sought to inform of how the Council coordinated

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school place planning with new development. The report also provided additional information about the role of strategic planning and a high level overview by school place planning area. The Committee had requested additional information on this point at its last meeting, when a report on school places had been presented.

The report author, the Lead Member for Education, the Corporate Director Place and the Head of Early Years, School Places and Access were in attendance to present the information and address the questions and comments of the Committee.

Officers informed of the key strategic priorities for school places and provided examples of how school basic need funding had been utilised to expand 29 schools, providing additional 3,681 school places for the Borough. Trafford Council had been commended by the Department for Education (DfE) for its effective and efficient use of basic need funding.

Officers illustrated how the DfE's methodology to determine the number of additional school places needed was different from the local authority's calculation which only considered the number of pupils who resided in the area. This led to a significant discrepancy between the figures reported by the DfE and those indicated by Trafford Council in its local sufficiency assessment.

Officers informed of how the number of pupils who wanted to attend schools in Trafford and who resided out of the area was higher in secondary schools. The reason for this higher demand was the selective education system which featured in the Borough. Officers also indicated that school places for 2021/22 had been provided. Consequently, the Council's statutory duties had been met. Officers noted that the challenge would be to achieve a balance between a sufficient numbers of school places and overprovision as places could only be provided in multiple of 30.

Officers outlined the role of Strategic Planning and the system in place to process planning applications in relation to education contributions. Officers provided data on School Place Planning Areas which showed the number and type of schools, supply of places and type of places and the pupil yield calculation from the Strategic Housing and Land Availability Assessment. This information helped officer to estimate future demand for school places.

Members sought clarification on a number of matters such as apparent discrepancy between education contribution seen at Planning Committee and content of today's report, efficacy of pupil yield formula and suitability for today's demand, sufficient spaces in primary schools for local pupils during the next five academic years and plans for new schools in Sale.

Officers responded that there were many schools in Trafford which had potential for expansion. Birth rate in Trafford was declining. The calculation on pupil yield was done with reference to new development. The Council focused on protecting local pupils but this was complicated where schools were their own admission authority. There was only one secondary school in Trafford where the Council was

the admission authority. Since April, the Council had secured £2M in Section 106 contribution for education and provision for new a school in the Borough. Timing of contribution had to be considered as it would be paid at a point during development. The Council would look at significant developments ensuring that new schools were included in a way that would be coordinated with existing provision.

RESOLVED that the content of the report be noted.

16. ADOPTION AND FOSTERING

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Lead Children in Care which informed of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on foster care in Trafford.

The report author, the Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care and the Executive Member for Children's Services were in attendance to present the information and address questions and comments of the Committee.

Officers explained how hard had been for foster parents as well as other families, to meet the additional requirements linked to the pandemic and to continue to support children and young people in their care. The Committee joined officers in thanking foster families for their continuous dedication and support.

Officers informed of the figures concerning fostering households in Trafford and how they had been supported during this challenging period via three main strategies looking at listening, informing and peer support. Through means such as newsletters, social media and training support group, officers had ensured that the challenges posed to the emotional health of children and their foster families were addressed through a therapeutic training response. A multi-agency response was also in place to meet the needs for practical support.

Officers informed of the additional help provided to those foster carers who were particularly vulnerable and a risk assessment tool had been used to identify them.

Members sought and received clarification on matters such as exit interview for carers who wished to end their role, the importance of peer support and mentoring to build fostering communities. Members learned that the service was working hard to develop this support scheme for foster carers. Members also asked that foster carer representatives be invited at a future meeting of the Committee to listen to their views and experiences on related matters.

The Executive Member for Children's Services informed that a listening exercise to better support foster carers and modernise the service was ongoing. This was a piece of work shared across Greater Manchester. Input and feedback from ex foster carers would form part of the service review.

RESOLVED: -

1. That the report be noted;

2. That the foster carer representatives be invited to join a future meeting of the Committee to learn about their view and experiences on related matters.

17. REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON SEND AND SCHOOL EXCLUSION

The Committee received a report of the Task and Finish Group on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and School Exclusion.

The Chair of the Committee who also chaired the Task and Finish Group presented the recommendations. The Executive Member for Children's Services thanked the Committee for the work undertaken on this matter and was keen to work through the content of the report and its recommendations. The report would be presented at the next meeting of the Executive in June 2021.

The Chair of the Committee thanked Members and Officers for their work and contribution on this issue.

RESOLVED: -

1. That the content of the report be noted;
2. That the recommendations be endorsed;
3. That the report be sent to the Executive for a response.

18. URGENT BUSINESS (IF ANY)

There were no matters of urgent business received.

19. EXCLUSION RESOLUTION

None

The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and finished at 7.33 pm