



YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2016

10.00 - 11.31 am in the Shrewsbury/Oswestry Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward

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Present

Shropshire Councillors

Councillor Joyce Barrow (Chairman)

Councillors Peggy Mullock (Vice Chairman), Andy Boddington, Hannah Fraser, Vince Hunt, Nic Laurens, Kevin Pardy, John Price and Robert Tindall

Co-Opted Members (Voting)

Sian Lines, Carol Morgan

27 Apologies and Substitutions

27.1 Apologies for absence were received from Kevin Turley and Peter Cherrington

The Chairman advised that Item 8 – Shropshire Children’s Centre Update would be taken after Members Questions

28 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

28.1 There were no interests declared

29 Minutes

29.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 20 July 2016 had been circulated

29.2 RESOLVED:-

That the minutes of the meeting of the Young Peoples Scrutiny Committee held on 20 July 2016 be accepted as a true record and signed by the Chairman

30 Public Question Time

30.1 There were no public questions

31 Members' Question Time

31.1 The following questions had been received from Councillor Roger Evans

1. I have recently been sent a copy of a message sent to certain selected Councillors in July. I was not on the list and have only seen this message in the last few days.

I note in the message it says the LA is fully supportive of this application. Can it be confirmed if this is the case or not. If the statement is true why the "LA is fully supportive" of this application and the confirmation that the LA will "commission 50 places with an additional 10 nursery places being available".

Response

The Children and Families Act places a duty on local authorities to 'keep under review its education provision.... made in its area for children and young people who have special educational needs or a disability.' (DfE. (2014). Children and Families Act 2014 c. 6 Part 3 Section 27)

As part of this review the LA is supportive of the Shrewsbury Academy Trust (SAT) free school bid to develop specialist provision in Shrewsbury. Working with the SAT to develop this provision will be a cost effective means ensuring that the LA is able to meet its statutory duty.

It is anticipated that the LA will commission between 50 and 60 places across the 5 to 16 age range by the end of the second year of operation. The LA will keep this under review and adjust, if necessary, to ensure both sufficiency of places and value for money. The LA will also quality assure its full range of SEND provision through monitoring of outcomes for children and young people with SEND, particularly with regard to outcomes relating to Preparation for Adulthood (PFA). This is in line with the duties placed on local authorities within the Children and Families Act.

Recent discussion between the LA and SAT has meant that there are currently no plans to develop nursery provision at this stage. The LA does not believe that there is a need for centralised specialist provision for this age group with this level of need. The LA are seeking to place children aged between 0 and 5 years within mainstream nursery/early years provision within local communities where possible.

The Parent and Carer Council (PACC) are supportive of this application and have been informed of, and are involved in, the initial planning of this development. This is in line with the duty placed on local authorities to involve parents (and young people) in strategic decision making when planning provision for SEND.

The provision is intended to meet the needs of children with complex SEN. It will cater mainly for children with a moderate to severe learning difficulty whose needs cannot be met appropriately in a mainstream setting. This may be because of very

low levels of cognitive functioning and/or because they have additional needs that mean that they are not able to function independently within a mainstream environment. These pupils require a curriculum that provides opportunity to develop independence and that may have a vocational focus in order to develop the work related skills that will enable them to fully participate within their community as adults. Currently this profile of pupil is likely to attend Severndale Academy.

Health data demonstrates that within Shropshire there is an increase in the number of children with very complex needs. As these children reach school age this will place further demand on places at Severndale Academy. A specialist free school for children with moderate to severe learning difficulties will mean that Severndale will have the capacity to meet increased demand for children with severe learning difficulties as well as those with profound and multiple learning difficulties.

2. Can we be told if this is likely to affect any other school in Shropshire, have these schools been informed, and will the LA be paying in full any transport costs incurred by parents in transporting their children to this new free school. Have the LA any further details on this application that can be shared with the scrutiny Committee.

Response

The only school that is likely to be affected within Shropshire is Severndale Academy. The principal of Severndale Academy is a member of the core planning group and is therefore informed.

The LA transport pupils who meet the criteria for transport for SEND. It is not anticipated that there will be an increase in transport costs to either parents or the LA as the majority of children attending this provision would have had transport provided to Severndale or to another specialist setting within a neighbouring authority.

Further details:

The bid will be submitted to the DfE at the end of this month. The final outcome of this bid will not be known until summer 2017. If successful then it is planned to open in September 2018. Capital funding for the project will be provided by central government and a high proportion of the running costs will also be provided from a central government budget for the first two years of operation (this will be commensurate with the number of commissioned places). We will keep cabinet fully updated of this and other proposals as they develop.

31.2 Mr Evans thanks officers for their response and by way of supplementary question expressed concern about the effect the proposals would have on other schools. The Director of Children's Services commented that there would be a positive outcome for all schools as there would be extra expertise available that they could access.

32 Shropshire Children's Centres - 2016 /17 update

- 32.1 The Committee received the report of the Commissioning Service Manager which provided an update on Children's Centres in Shropshire covering current developments and the future direction of travel
- 32.2 The Commissioning Service Manager reminded members that there were currently 12 Children's Centre Areas across the county. She outlined the services provided and reminded Members that the Children's Centres played a key part in the delivery of the priorities set out in the Early Help Strategy
- 32.3 The Commissioning Service Manager introduced Chris Reeves, Chair of the South Shropshire Children's Centre Advisory Board and Adam Roberts, Chair of the North West Shropshire Children's Centre Advisory Board who updated Members on developments within their areas.
- 32.4 The Commissioning Service Manger then introduced Mrs Jackie Griffin who gave an account of her experiences of using Children's Centre Services. Mrs Griffin commented that the help she had received from staff had been invaluable and that she did not know how she would have coped without it.
- 32.5 A Member asked for further details of partnership working. The Commissioning Service Manager advised that there were currently a range of arrangements which included: -
- Co-facilitation where staff worked alongside staff from other agencies
 - Joint Commissioning
 - Joint use of Volunteers
- 32.6 A Member commented that he had been involved in the development resilient community in Oswestry and asked for an update on how it was working. The Commissioning Service Manager informed the meeting that feedback had been very positive and that the opportunity to work with partners to develop a "one stop shop" had been key to this.
- 32.7 The Chairman thanked Mr Reeves, Mr Roberts and Mrs Griffin for attending the meeting and relating their experiences.

32.8 RESOLVED:

That the Scrutiny Committee note the contents of the report

33 Impact of Budget Cuts on Services

- 33.1 The meeting received a presentation from the Director of Children's Services (copy attached to the signed minutes) which set out the budget proposal for the financial year 2016 – 17 and the saving that were being proposed.

- 33.2 In her presentation the Director of Children's Services reminded Members of the savings that needed to be made, the principles underpinning the decisions that were being made and the key areas for savings and the potential impact on services. She also outlined the main pressures which may mean that the savings are not achieved.
- 33.3 In response to a question regarding how the Council could continue to monitor and influence school performance the Service Manager Education Improvement & Efficiency advised that this would become increasingly difficult as capacity to support schools was reduced and there was a move for Councils to step away from school improvement.

34 Proposed Recoupment of Academy Conversion Costs

- 34.1 The meeting received the report of the Director of Children's Services which set out proposals for the introduction of a charge to converting schools to cover Council costs, to be charged against the Government grant they receive for costs relating to the conversion process.
- 34.2 The Director of Children's Services advised Members that a report was being taken to Cabinet proposing the introduction of a charge of £5000 to schools that were converting to Academy status to cover the Councils administrative costs, which previously had been borne by the relevant department.
- 34.3 In response to a query the Director of Children's Services confirmed that the charge would be paid out of the grant that a school receives from the DfE to cover costs relating to the setting up of the Academy and would not affect the school budget.
- 34.4 RESOLVED:
- That Members support the proposal to introduce a charge to recoup the Council's costs in relation to the academy conversion process.

35 Work Programme

- 35.1 The current Scrutiny Committee Work Programme and Cabinet forward Plan had been circulated.
- 35.2 A Member suggested that an item on Education Access be added to the work Programme
- 35.3 The Director of Children's Services suggested that following the item on Children's centres Members may like to receive one of the interactive sessions on Understanding Your Child. This was welcomed by Members
- 35.4 The Chairman asked Members to let her know if there was any other topic that they wished to be added to the work programme

36 Date of Next Meeting

36.1 Members were reminded that the next scheduled meeting of the Committee would be held on Wednesday 14 December 2016

Signed (Chairman)

Date: