

Public Document Pack

SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 31 MARCH 2022

Present: Councillors Guthrie (Chair), Bell, Laurent, Mitchell and Dr Paffey

Apologies: Appointed Members: Rob Sanders

35. **APOLOGIES AND CHANGES IN PANEL MEMBERSHIP (IF ANY)**

The apologies of Appointed Member, Rob Sanders were noted.

36. **MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (INCLUDING MATTERS ARISING)**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 November 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

37. **ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION**

The Panel received the report of the Executive Director – Children and Learning, which summarised the role of the Elective Home Education (EHE) Service and the current position in Southampton.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Councillor J Baillie; Robert Henderson, Executive Director - Children and Learning; Derek Wiles, Head of Education and Learning; and Bryn Roberts, Service Manager – Inclusion; were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- That a new duty for Local Authorities to maintain a statutory register of children who were not on roll at a school, including children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE) and other children not at school, would come into effect in April or September 2022.
- That children were tracked from first point of contact with a service the council provided, such as a sure start centre, to check there were in education. However, families that move into the city won't be tracked until the service receives information about the children in that family.
- There is no requirement for parents to say why they are EHE.
- The service provides support in partnership with parents who are EHE and resources are focused on families based on the level of need.
- The data indicated that the performance of children who are EHE was generally below national standards. Whilst there were a few parents who provided excellent EHE, they were not required to follow the national curriculum if the education provided was age and learning appropriate. The evidence indicated that generally EHE does not give the same breadth of challenge and education that a school can.

- The Education White Paper proposed that all schools should join Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) by 2030 the impact of that would be a loss of capital assets as buildings and sites are transferred into MATs and more schools moving away from Local Authority control.

RESOLVED: That the Panel would be provided with a briefing on the Education White Paper, and details of developments which related to additional powers for local authorities regarding EHE, when more detail was available.

38. **CHILDREN AND LEARNING SERVICE SELF EVALUATION OF PRACTICE**

The Panel received the report of the Executive Director – Children and Learning which invited the Panel to consider the latest version of the self-evaluation which was finalised in January 2022.

Robert Henderson, Executive Director - Children and Learning; and Stuart Webb, Head of Quality Assurance; were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- That the Destination 22 service transformation programme was underway, and changes had been implemented which provided a good foundation for an improvement in performance to be achieved. It could take several months for the effect of those changes to be reflected in the performance data.
- The new leadership and management structure was now in place and they were focused on the development and delivery of the audit programme.

RESOLVED: That the Panel would be provided with a diagram which depicted the journey of a child with the old and new service names identified to highlight the transformation of the service that was underway.

39. **CHILDREN AND LEARNING - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel received the report of the Service Director, Legal and Business Operations, which recommended that the Panel considered and challenged the performance of Children and Learning Services in Southampton.

Robert Henderson, Executive Director - Children and Learning; and Jo Feeney, Performance Manager; were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the officers, the Panel noted the following:

- That the new Care Director software was rolled out in January.
- Staff have been using the new system, however there was an increase in data errors as naturally mistakes have been made by staff using the new software.
- The transfer to the new software had also impacted on the collection of data on the performance indicators.

40. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel received the report of the Service Director, Legal and Business Operations which enabled the Panel to monitor and track progress on recommendations made at previous meetings.

The Panel noted that all the requested information had been provided and utilised to inform the discussion of the agenda items.

The Panel also noted that the Chair and Vice Chair would be meeting with the Quality Assurance Unit Management Team for a more detailed understanding of the work they lead on.

This page is intentionally left blank