
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 NOVEMBER 2024

Present: Councillors Barnes-Andrews (Chair), Webb (Vice-Chair), Chapman, Allen, G Lambert, Beaurain and Y Frampton

Apologies: Appointed Members: Rob Sanders

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2024 be approved and signed as a correct record.

21. **EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC - EXEMPT PAPERS INCLUDED IN THE FOLLOWING ITEM**

RESOLVED that in accordance with the Council's Constitution, specifically the Access to Information Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution, the press and public be excluded from the meeting in respect of any consideration of Appendix 2 be considered as exempt from general publication based on Category 7a of paragraph 10.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules.

22. **EDUCATION OUTCOMES AND CONTEXT**

The Panel considered the report of the Executive Director - Children and Learning, providing an overview of education outcomes at Key Stages 2 and 4 in Southampton in 2023/24 and associated education issues.

Cllr Winning – Cabinet Member for Children and Learning; Rob Henderson – Executive Director, Children's Services & Learning; Clodagh Freeston – Head of Education Services; Kerica Hunt – Service Manager, Education Welfare Service; Bryn Roberts – Service Manager, Inclusion; Edd Shackleton – Principal Data Analyst; Zoe Snow – Admissions and School Place Planning Manager and Alison Philpott – Cross Phase Advisor were in attendance and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting. In addition, the Panel watched a video presentation from Harry Kutty – Head Teacher of Cantell School detailing his schools journey to improved performance.

The Panel received briefings that set out the current position of educational attainment in the City and the Authority's ambitions and accompanying plans to address education outcomes in Southampton.

The priorities for the education outcomes transformation programme were outlined. The priorities included increasing attainment levels; improving school attendance; and reducing exclusions.

To deliver the objectives the focus was on working with schools to become more collaborative and collective, harnessing a one city approach through an Education Partnership vehicle.

The Panel noted that improving education outcomes in Southampton would take time and it would require persistence, patience and commitment. Concern was raised that

pressures on budgets would deflect from the long term goal of improving the quality of education for all children.

Panel Members were informed that the capital programme for schools was a cause of friction between the Council and Schools. Issues relating to a lack of understanding about how capital works get prioritised; a lack of clarity about responsibilities and poor communication about the school capital programme were raised as areas where improvements were required.

23. **CHILDREN AND LEARNING - PERFORMANCE AND TRANSFORMATION**

The Panel considered the report of the Scrutiny Manager recommending that the Panel consider and challenge the performance of Children's Services and Learning in Southampton.

Councillor Winning – Cabinet Member for Children & Learning, Rob Henderson - Executive Director, Children & Learning, Steph Murray – Deputy Director, Children and Learning and Laura Trevett – Strategic Performance Manager were in attendance and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the meeting.

The Panel discussed the performance of safeguarding services in October and questioned why there had been an increase in activity and demand in the period. The Panel also raised the timescales for the opening of the new children's homes in the city; 16-17 year olds in our care receiving support to access education, employment and training; and, the recruitment of foster cares. It was explained that the city performed well compared to regional and statistical comparators but that there was a national shortage of foster carers. The Panel also reviewed the number of children with parental consent to adoptive placement under Section 20 of the Children Act 2002.

RESOLVED that the Panel are provided with a briefing about children who are in care under section 20 of the Children Act 2002.

24. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel considered and noted the report of the Scrutiny Manager recommending that the Panel considers the responses to recommendations from previous meetings and provides feedback.