
SOUTHAMPTON CITY COUNCIL
CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY PANEL
MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 29 SEPTEMBER 2022

Present: Councillors Winning (Chair), Bunday, D Galton, Laurent (Vice-Chair), Vaughan, Cooper and Denness
Appointed Members: Rob Sanders

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

It was noted that, following receipt of the temporary resignation of Councillors McEwing and Windle from the Panel, the Director of Legal and Business Services, acting under delegated powers, had appointed Councillors Cooper and Denness to replace them for the purposes of this meeting.

13. **DISCLOSURE OF PERSONAL AND PECUNIARY INTERESTS**

Councillors Denness, Bunday and Mr Rob Sanders informed the meeting that they were Governors at schools in Southampton. This was noted but did not preclude them from engaging in the conversation.

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

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2022, be approved, and signed as a correct record.

15. **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT IN SOUTHAMPTON**

The Panel considered the provisional key stage results and the supplementary data, as detailed in the appendices, and discussed the details with Councillor Dr Paffey, Cabinet Member for Children and Learning, and Derek Wiles, Divisional Head of Education and Learning, educational attainment in Southampton.

The Panel and Officers' attention was drawn to two confidential appendices attached to the report. The confidentiality of Appendices 2 and 3 was based on Category 7a of paragraph 10.4 of the Council's Access to Information Procedure Rules, as they contained information which was subject to an obligation of confidentiality. Members agreed not to discuss the content of the confidential appendices in the meeting, and it was therefore determined that there would be no requirement to exclude the press or public.

In discussions with the Cabinet Member and officers the Panel noted the following:

- Concerns were raised about the 2022 KS2 outcomes for Southampton where the Expected Standards were at least 1%, and as much as 7%, below the National average across all subjects and combined indicators.
- KS4 results could not be compared with last year's figures due to the different system of testing.
- The national dip in GCSE results was not replicated in Southampton, where levels were maintained and continued the steady improvement seen over the last five years.

- The KS4 Progress 8 results anticipated in September, were expected in mid-October.
- Southampton's A level results remained well below national performance standards but had improved from 2021 to 2022.
- A city-wide solution was needed for Post-16 education due a sizable number of Southampton students attending schools outside the city and the sustainability of colleges in the city.
- Educational attainment of looked after children was to be discussed at the 24 November of the Panel.
- Local authority services provided to schools may be affected if funding currently provided to the City Council was redirected to schools.
- Many Early Years (EY) settings in Southampton were impacted by the pandemic. The majority of those operating in Southampton offer quality provision. The sufficiency of places in Southampton was to be addressed through the development of hubs following the receipt of funding.

RESOLVED that consideration be given to an additional meeting of the Panel to focus on educational attainment with a focus on scrutinising the use of catch up funding; the soon to be published Key Stage 4 national results, including Progress 8; and, Early Years Foundation Stage performance.

NOTE: Councillors Denness and A Bunday and Appointed Member Mr Rob Sanders declared an interest in the above item and remained at the meeting.

16. **POST 16 PROVISION, PARTICIPATION, NEET AND UNKNOWN**

The Panel considered the report of the Service Director, Legal and Business Services, which recommended that the Panel consider the information provided and discuss the challenges raised with regards to Post-16 provision and participation in Southampton with the Cabinet Member and invited officers.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Learning, Councillor Dr Paffey and Southampton City Council Officers, Derek Wiles, Divisional Head of Education and Learning, and Clodagh Freeston, Service Manager – Education Strategy, Planning and Improvement were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

In discussions with the Cabinet Member and officers, the Panel noted the following:

- A reduction in NEET figures from 7.6% last year to 5.9% in 2022 (to pre-pandemic levels).
- An audit of the quality of careers guidance was being undertaken to identify risks and encourage support to be provided earlier in a young person's development.
- A reluctance to continue in long term learning had been brought about due to increased anxiety following the pandemic.
- Performance was anticipated to plateau in 2023 as a result of a decrease in school improvement officers and engagement officers.
- Work was being carried out in schools to identify the needs of young people in Years 10 and 11 to help support their progress and positive transition into KS 5.
- NEET support for Looked After Children was being prioritised. This presented a challenge when the child was placed outside the authority.
- 2022-23 NEET figures were expected to be ready in March 2023.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the Panel be kept informed of key developments concerning the proposed city wide solution to Post 16 provision in Southampton.
- (ii) that the NEET figures for 2022/23 be circulated to the Panel when available.

18. **CHILDREN AND LEARNING - PERFORMANCE**

The Panel considered the report of the Service Director, Legal and Business Services, which recommended that the Panel consider and challenge the performance of Children's Services and Learning in Southampton.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Learning, Councillor Dr Paffey and Southampton City Council Officers, Steph Murray, Deputy Director of Children and Learning; and Petra Pankova, Performance Manager, Children and Learning were present and, with the consent of the Chair, addressed the Panel.

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

- A steady decrease in the number of children subject to Child Protection Plans and the number of Looked After Children.
- Following the international recruitment drive, staff capacity had improved with a positive impact on caseloads.
- Demand had increased, with a rise of 2-3% in comparison to previous months.
- Early help had been offered to children and families in an attempt to reduce the number of statutory referrals.
- 78% of referrals had been completed within the statutory 45 days, an increase on 71% in July, and a projected stable move towards the target of 90-100%.
- Families being unavailable in August impacted on children being visited within the statutory timescale.
- Data discrepancies remain as Care Director continues to bed in. Manual systems ensured all children were accounted for and issues have been resolved.

RESOLVED

- (i) that the key findings from the audit of re-referrals are summarised within, or appended to, the performance report to be considered at the 24 November 2022 meeting of the Panel.
- (ii) that Social Worker turnover data is included in the performance report analysis for the 24 November 2022 meeting.

18. **MONITORING SCRUTINY RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Panel received the report of the Director, Legal and Business Services, 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.