

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY EDUCATION BUSINESS PANEL

Tuesday, 13 February 2018 at 7.06 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Hall (Chair), Carl Handley, Jim Mallory, John Muldoon, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Pauline Morrison and Luke Sorba

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gareth Siddorn, Councillor Liam Curran, Monsignor N Rothon and Councillor Maja Hilton

7. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the open meeting held on 23 January 2018 be confirmed as a correct record.

8. Declarations of Interests

None received.

9. Decision made by Mayor and Cabinet on 7 February 2018

The Head of Standards and Inclusion introduced the report.

The Chair said members were concerned as they recognised a lot of uncertainties around secondary school places. Panel members were told that school places were linked to various things including local planning, building regulations and activities of neighbouring boroughs.

Councillor Johnston-Franklin said she was concerned there were 450 vacant places in Lewisham secondary schools. The Head of Standards and Inclusion said that the situation had got worse, she added that as there was parental choice, parents were worried about the standard of Lewisham schools. She said officers would be working very hard to address the current perception, as perceptions were very difficult to change. The Head of Standards and Inclusion said that officers were also working with schools to manage sensible curriculum planning.

Councillor Mallory asked how schools plan to utilise the space created when addressing primary demands, and was told that officers were working with schools to see how best they could utilise these spaces effectively. Councillor Mallory asked whether officers felt there would be another decline in applications and was told it would be very difficult to predict this as we live in a changeable world.

Councillor Mallory asked if this was a pattern, and was told there were some schools that were popular and some that were struggling to attract pupils. Councillor Mallory said the answer was to raise achievements within Lewisham secondary schools.

The Head of Standards and Inclusion said an in-depth review was done 18 months ago on schools, focusing on demand and supply and it might not be wise to do another so soon. She said officers were working with and influencing schools were

they could. The Chair said the Executive Director for Children and Young People would need to change some of the arrangements following a review of needs. Councillor Sorba, Chair of the Children and Young People Select Committee said the Select Committee would look at their work programme and see what they could do.

The Chair thanked officers for the report.

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

Meeting ended: 7.25pm