

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY EDUCATION BUSINESS PANEL

Tuesday, 13 March 2018 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Hall (Chair), Liam Curran, Jim Mallory, John Muldoon, Maja Hilton, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Luke Sorba and Monsignor N Rothon

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gareth Siddorn, Councillor Carl Handley and Councillor Pauline Morrison

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10pm and reconvened at 7:50pm.

10. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the open meeting held on 13 February 2018 be confirmed as an accurate record.

11. Declarations of Interests

The Chair declared a personal non pecuniary interest in item 3 as a Board Member of Brentwood and Watergate Joint Committee Trust.

12. Decisions made by Mayor and Cabinet on 28 February 2018

Establishment of Lewisham Learning Partnership

The Executive Director for Children and Young People introduced the report.

Councillor Sorba, Chair of Children and Young People Select Committee stated that the Select Committee had discussed the proposed Partnership, and he had some reservations about the proposal. Councillor Sorba said he was concerned that the long-term plan was for the Partnership to become a separate Legal Entity. He said given the challenges faced by Lewisham schools the Partnership should concentrate on addressing those challenges, instead of offering its services externally.

Business Panel commented that funding was from public money and the School Improvement budget, and there was no advantage to the Council if the Partnership became a separate Legal Entity. The Executive Director for Children and Young People notified Panel Members that there was no discussion on separate Legal Entity status currently within the Partnership, as this was not a priority. She said ultimately it would be for the Partnership to decide how they operate, but for now it has to determine its structure.

Panel Members asked about the equalities implications following the secondment of a Headteacher to the role of Interim Director to the Partnership. The Executive Director for Children and Young People said an agreed process for the appointment was followed, and the interim position would run until the end of the financial year. This would be followed by an open permanent recruitment process, which would be widely advertised.

Panel Members raised concerns about accountability and funding , especially if the separate Legal Entity status was pursued. Panel Members were concerned that accountability and proper monitoring would not be done, as it would not be within the Council’s power to ensure things were done properly.

Panel Members asked who would be setting the targets and objectives of the Partnership and were told the schools would set their own targets with the overarching targets being set by the Partnership.

Monsignor Rotherham said there was a great deal of enthusiasm associated with this Partnership, but he would urge that some key indicators and objectives be put in place, plus regular reports to the Education Business Panel to prevent the Partnership becoming another consultative body. It was commented that education was a main driver in improving prosperity, and as a Council Lewisham should be focussing on improvement.

RESOLVED that:

- i. the decision of the Mayor be noted.
- ii. It be noted that funding was from public money.
- iii. concerns were raised about a future change in the Partnership’s status.
- iv. an explicit Mayoral decision be made if there is a change of structure or status of the Partnership.
- v. the Mayor be requested to instruct officers to do an open recruitment process for the next Leadership appointment at the end of the 1 year secondment.
- vi. the Mayor be requested to instruct officers to provide a Framework of work for the Children and Young People Select Committee for consideration.
- vii. the Mayor be requested to ask the responsible Cabinet Member to review the work of the Partnership on a regular basis.

Watergate Expansion Decision

The Chair said the demand for places was constantly increasing. He highlighted the importance of involving local Members and the community in these projects and said officers should ensure this would be done during the building stage.

Action >>>>> ED CYP

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

Greenvale Expansion Decision

The Chair said the demand for places was constantly increasing. He highlighted the importance of involving Local Members and the community in these projects, and asked that officers ensure this would be done during the building stage.

Action >>>>> ED CYP

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

13. Exclusion of the Press and Public

Noted.

The following is a summary of the discussion at the closed meeting:

14. Decision made by Mayor and Cabinet on 28 February 2018

SEND School Expansion Approval

The Executive Director for Children and Young People introduced the report.

Following a request from the Chair, the Executive Director for Children and Young People explained the next stage of the project. The Chair requested Local Members involvement in the planning stage as concerns had been raised about the space available at Watergate. Business Panel Members urged that officers ensure that the facilities were utilised sensitively.

Action >>>>> ED CYP

RESOLVED that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

Meeting ended 7.50pm

Chair