

MINUTES OF THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY EDUCATION BUSINESS PANEL

Tuesday, 22 November 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Alan Hall (Chair), Liam Curran, Brenda Dacres, Carl Handley, David Michael, Jamie Milne, Hilary Moore and John Muldoon

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor James-J Walsh

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Gareth Siddorn and Councillor Jim Mallory

The meeting was adjourned at 7.20pm and reconvened at 7.21pm

4. Minutes

The Chair said some of the actions were still outstanding, and asked about the update on Sedgehill School. The Head of Standards and Inclusion said the Executive Director for Children and Young People had sent out a response to all members during the day. The Chair said he would check his mail, and requested outstanding actions from the last meeting to be actioned.

Action >>>>> ED CYP

The Chair asked the Head of Corporate Resources to ensure Sedgehill School's deficit is discussed at Audit Panel as requested, and was told it would be discussed at their 6 December meeting.

Action >>>>> Head of Corporate Resources

RESOLVED that:

- i. the minutes of the open meeting held on 1 November 2016 be confirmed as a correct record.
- ii. that the outstanding actions from the last meeting be progressed as requested.

5. Declarations of Interests

None submitted.

6. Decision Made by Mayor and Cabinet on 9 November 2016

Application for a Licensed Deficit for Prendergast Ladywell school and Forest Hill School

The report was introduced by the Head of Standards and Inclusion. She emphasised that both schools were working very hard in partnership to resolve the problems. In response to a question from the Chair about ensuring the deficit doesn't increase, the Head of Standards and Inclusion said she agreed that if the issues don't get addressed the deficit would rise significantly, but she assured Business Panel that Forest Hill school had already taken steps to reduce their staff

numbers and had recently cut 19 administrative posts, and a savings of about £790k was made. She said that was the level of saving required and proper process would be put in place to ensure the school fulfilled its curriculum.

Councillor Dacres asked how that level of administrative job cuts could take place in a school, and asked whether the school had been overstaffed as there seemed to be a lot of administrative staff. The Head of Standards and Inclusion said she doesn't have the information. Councillor Moore, Chair of the Children and Young People Select Committee explained how a school could have as much non-teaching staff and gave examples of the type of posts involved. Councillor Dacres asked whether an equalities impact assessment had been done, and was told this was being done.

The Chair asked who provided HR services for the school, and was told the Council managed the HR process for the school. The Chair also asked who provided the audit function for the school and was told it was provided by Lewisham Council, but the financial oversight was the responsibility of the school's Governors.

Business Panel was informed that Prendergast Ladywell school had made significant savings and had cut down their teaching staff from 56 to 47, and were still providing a wide curriculum for pupils. The Chair asked if the school had been overstaffed as that was a significant reduction in 1 year. He said he was concerned the effect of these changes could have a huge impact on the school. The Head of Standards and Inclusion said this was being mitigated by a rapid improvement plan, secondary change work, additional support and the Council was working with the Governing Body, providing training and support throughout the process.

Councillor Dacres said she hoped quantity was being replaced by quality and was told that although the number of staff had been cut this would not affect teaching provided for the pupils, only the staff would have to teach more hours than before to maintain the teaching hours. The Chair said the report mentioned 8 schools being in deficit, and asked if licensed deficit applications would be made for the remaining 5 and was told not at this stage.

The Chair asked for an update on these 8 schools to be reported to the Children and Young People Select Committee and that the Audit Panel also look into the issues faced by these schools. The Chair also stated that the outstanding actions would need to be progressed as soon as possible;

- officers to provide equalities impact on staffing reduction at Forest Hill school.
- officers to brief Business Panel Members on the Council's governance role to investigate the school deficits.
- officers to provide an update on Sedgehill School deficit to be circulated to Business Panel Members.

Action >>>>> ED CYP, Head of Corporate Resources

Resolved that the decision of the Mayor be noted.

Meeting ended 7.30pm

