



NOTICE OF MEETING

EDUCATION, CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

WEDNESDAY, 1 FEBRUARY 2023 AT 5.30 PM

THE EXECUTIVE MEETING ROOM - THIRD FLOOR, THE GUILDHALL,
PORTSMOUTH

Telephone enquiries to Lisa Gallacher, Local Democracy Officer 02392 834056

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If any member of the public wishing to attend the meeting has access requirements, please notify the contact named above.

Membership

Councillor Ryan Brent (Chair)
Councillor Tom Coles
Councillor Leo Madden

Councillor Dave Ashmore
Councillor John Smith
Councillor Judith Smyth

Standing Deputies

Councillor Matthew Atkins
Councillor Charlotte Gerada
Councillor Mark Jeffery

Councillor Abdul Kadir
Councillor Scott Payter-Harris

(NB This Agenda should be retained for future reference with the minutes of this meeting.)

Please note that the agenda, minutes and non-exempt reports are available to view online on the Portsmouth City Council website: www.portsmouth.gov.uk

Public health guidance for staff and the public due to Winter coughs, colds and viruses, including Covid-19

- Following the government announcement 'Living with Covid-19' made on 21 February and the end of universal free testing from 1 April, attendees are no longer required to undertake any asymptomatic/ lateral flow test within 48 hours of the meeting; however, we still encourage attendees to follow the public health precautions we have followed over the last two years to protect themselves and others including vaccination and taking a lateral flow test should they wish.
- We strongly recommend that attendees should be double vaccinated and have received any boosters they are eligible for.
- If unwell we encourage you not to attend the meeting but to stay at home. Updated government guidance from 1 April advises people with a respiratory infection, a high temperature and who feel unwell, to stay at home and avoid contact with other people, until they feel well enough to resume normal activities and they no longer have a high

temperature. From 1 April, anyone with a positive Covid-19 test result is still being advised to follow this guidance for five days, which is the period when you are most infectious.

- We encourage all attendees to wear a face covering while moving around crowded areas of the Guildhall.
- Although not a legal requirement, attendees are strongly encouraged to keep a social distance and take opportunities to prevent the spread of infection by following the 'hands, face, space' and 'catch it, kill it, bin it' advice that protects us from coughs, colds and winter viruses, including Covid-19.
- Hand sanitiser is provided at the entrance and throughout the Guildhall. All attendees are encouraged to make use of hand sanitiser on entry to the Guildhall.

AGENDA

1 Apologies for absence

2 Declarations of interest

3 Minutes of previous meeting - 30 January 2020 (Pages 3 - 8)

RECOMMENDED that the minutes of the meeting held on 30 January 2020 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

4 Review into school attendance - draft scoping document (Page 9)

The draft scoping document for the review into school attendance is attached for discussion and approval. This can be updated during the review if necessary.

Sarah Daly, Director of Children, Families and Education and Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director Education will be in attendance to provide initial evidence.

5 Proposed dates of future meetings

Proposed dates for the panel to agree:

Wednesday 22 February at 5pm

Wednesday 15 March at 5pm

Members of the public are now permitted to use both audio visual recording devices and social media during this meeting, on the understanding that it neither disrupts the meeting or records those stating explicitly that they do not wish to be recorded. Guidance on the use of devices at meetings open to the public is available on the Council's website and posters on the wall of the meeting's venue.

Agenda Item 3

EDUCATION, CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel held on Thursday, 30 January 2020 at 5.00 pm at the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

Councillors Frank Jonas BEM (in the Chair)
Jason Fazackarley
Hannah Hockaday
Jeanette Smith

1. Apologies for absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dowling and Councillor Coles.

2. Declarations of interest (AI 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Minutes of the previous meeting held on 16 September 2019 (AI 3)

Julia Katherine advised that there were a few corrections needed on page 3 of the minutes as follows:

Paragraph 1, the following text should be added before the second sentence - 'The SEND team are responsible for school placement for all children with EHCP's in special schools or mainstream schools.'

Paragraph 3 - The additional text in bold to be added: 'The Portsmouth Inclusive Education Quality Mark (a Portsmouth initiative) recognises good inclusive practice in schools. This was also recognised in the recent **SEND Local Area inspection in July 2019**'.

Paragraph 3 - The additional text in bold to be added: 'Officers said that they would expect specialist provision in schools to be recognised in any **school** inspection report'.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2019 be confirmed and signed as a correct record subject to the above amendments.

4. Review into support for children with disabilities (AI 4)

Councillor Jonas advised that he had attended the Portsmouth Parent Voice Coffee morning along with Councillors Smith and Dowling on 7 November. He invited Councillor Smith to give her feedback on the visit. Notes from the visits were previously circulated to the panel along with some additional comments from Dr Katherine clarifying some of the points raised.

Councillor Smith said she had found the visit very 'hard hitting' due to some of the experiences the parents had shared and some parents had been quite damning about Portsmouth City Council. Issues that were raised included that they were not included in decision making, were not receiving phone calls and did not feel supported. Parents they had spoken to had been very upset about the pre-paid cards reducing by £50 and did not understand the local offer or where to go for information. She added though that at the time of the coffee morning, the council had been considering limiting the use of the pre-paid cards. Councillor Horton at her recent Education Cabinet decision meeting did not agree to this. Councillor Smith said she had been pleased about that as a lot of parents were extremely concerned about this.

Councillor Smith got the impression that Portsmouth Parent Voice had become a one stop shop for parents and some parents had said that there was not enough support for families. Most families spoken to at the visit were working as well as caring for their child(ren) and some families were struggling to function. Some parents said that going to work was their only respite.

Some parents whose children were in mainstream schools said that the schools are constantly phoning parents to collect their child as they cannot cope with their behaviour in a school environment. Councillor Smith felt that this might be that children are in the wrong place or that schools are not equipped to deal with the needs of the child. Parents had felt that the situation with secondary schools was woeful as they did not fully understand how to deal with their child's additional needs or behaviours. At primary level the situation was better and members heard positive stories about how colleges are dealing with their child's additional needs. Some parents reported though that children often hide any issues they are having at school and let this out when they get home which causes issues with home life. Parents felt that no-one asks about this so they have to cope alone.

Some parents were using their pre-paid cards on taxis for schools. Parents were aware that the home to school transport budget is over budget but felt that they had not been asked what their child needs. When members asked the parents what the council could do to improve the situation they mentioned working with parents to establish their needs. They also mentioned the council tax precept and more joined up services so all professionals work together. Parents had been very grateful for the members for attending the coffee morning to hear their views.

Councillor Jonas added that the main thing he took away from the visit to the PPV coffee morning was that parents had felt there was a severe lack of communication with them. In response to a question Ms Daly (Assistant Director Children and Families) explained that the authority undertake assessments based on child needs which inform the care plan and package. This focusses on the child's needs, the needs of the family also the environment and local community to look at the holistic needs of the child and family.

Dr Julia Katherine (Head of Inclusion) was invited to comment on what the members had fed back. She said she did not recognise the picture painted from the feedback. Dr Katherine said many of the issues raised in the feedback were outside of the scope of this scrutiny review. She said that she would be happy to provide background information about any of the issues that had been mentioned in the feedback but that she had not as yet been asked to do so as none of these areas were within the scope of the scrutiny panel review. She said that it was important that panel members had access to accurate and comprehensive information in order to enable them to come to valid conclusions and to make informed recommendations.

Dr Katherine reminded members that in July 2019 the authority were inspected by Ofsted and CQC where it was recognised as one of the best in the country for provision for SEND. Ofsted met with over 60 parents/carers in an open meeting and over 500 parents responded to the council's survey, of which 85% reported that they felt listened to.

Councillor Fazackarley suggested in light of these concerns the panel may wish to consider inviting Councillor Horton as Cabinet member to the next meeting to provide evidence for the review.

The panel considered the possibility of widening the current review to include all SEND provision. Members felt it was important to get the offer right for parents and parents have a big part to play in that. There were 20-25 parents present at the coffee morning and they were all saying the same thing. It was felt that this needed to be part of the review to improve the offer.

Ms Daly said it was distressing to hear the views of the parents. The SEND inspection was very thorough and this was one of the best reports in the country. She said she would appreciate giving the panel some more detailed information. The Chair said that if there was more information that could be provided to the panel on the wider subject of SEND provision that would be sensible.

Dr Katherine said that if the scope of the review were to change the panel would need to start from scratch. The panel were also reminded that changing the scope would mean the Scrutiny Management Panel would need to approve this prior to commencing the review.

Councillor Hockaday said the council's record of completing of Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP) within 20 weeks is fantastic. In response to a question Dr Katherine said that the EHCP completion rate was 99.5% in Portsmouth compared to 60% nationally. The authority have received letters of commendations about this and the authority was very strong in this area. Every child with an EHCP has an annual review each year. For some this may be from age range 0-25. The authority prioritise the annual reviews for those coming up for a phase transfer to ensure that children receive the support they need and that no child loses out following any requests for change of placement. The authority are on track for completion of all phase transfers reviews by the statutory date of 15th February. As part of the process

of carrying out all new EHCP needs assessments and annual reviews, parents/carers are invited to a meeting in school to 'co-produce' the EHCP.

Feedback from Beechside visit.

Councillor Smith said this had been a very positive visit and the staff and care provided were excellent. The downside to the service was the waiting list. There are 15 children on the waiting list and 30 referrals and this was disappointing. It seems that Beechside needs more beds or a bigger facility as they are at maximum capacity. She felt that the authority needed to look at the provision. Two years ago Beechside went from opening seven days a week down to five days a week due to needing to make savings of £120,000. This has had an impact on the service that is provided. Councillor Smith felt this was an excellent provision and she would like more children and parents to be able to benefit from the provision and the respite it gives.

Councillor Jonas endorsed these comments and said the members had been able to watch the interaction between staff and the children and it was excellent. He agreed that options for expanding the service should be investigated as having children on the waiting list was having an impact on families. This however would have cost implications. The panel noted that unfortunately authority's budgets are cut year on year and there is not the money to provide everything anymore and there were so many areas that were a priority. Members felt this was a remarkable service that could be better if it had more money available.

Ms Daly said that the staff at Beechside do an amazing job and was pleased that members had the opportunity to visit the service. Previously the authority had made the decision to reduce the provision at Beechside as there was not the demand to require it to open seven days a week. Savings were made as opening seven days was not needed, however the authority was now in a different position with children on the waiting list. The Council would need to look at what the cost would be to open the service for the additional two days. She said if the panel feel that's the need they would need to consider how to meet this need alongside the other priorities in an ever demanding environment. The children using the service are the most vulnerable children and families cope with most incredible situations with their children. Beechside allowed children to remain at home. She was reassured the members had a positive experience of visiting Beechside as it is such a great service.

Future meetings

Officers would meet to discuss what additional information to share with the panel and any additional future meetings.

The meeting concluded at 5.40 pm.

Councillor Frank Jonas BEM
Chair

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Agenda Item 4

Portsmouth City Council Scrutiny Scoping Document

Scrutiny Panel	Education, Children and Young People
Topic	School attendance with a focus on transitional years
Purpose of enquiry inc. potential outcomes. (The remit to be clear and concise as this statement forms the backbone of the enquiry)	<p>This topic was agreed by the Scrutiny Management Panel on 16 January 2023</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand the main reasons for school absence in transitional years, particularly Years 6 to 7 and Years 11 to 12 and to review the Council's and wider Portsmouth Education Partnership strategies to improve school attendance • To investigate where there is good practice and where there is scope for improvement in relation to the transition years into secondary.
Reason for enquiry	To consider the drop in school attendance and increase in suspensions following transition to year 7.
Enquiry format	Three formal evidence gathering meetings.
Corporate Priority linked to	A city of lifelong learning
Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Cllr Horton, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education
Relevant officers	<p>Sarah Daly, Director of Children, Families and Education Mike Stoneman, Deputy Director, Education Liz Robinson, Head of Inclusion Debbie Anderson, Head of School Improvement and Early years Sarah Christopher, PEP and Inclusion Manager Neil Stevenson, Admissions, Attendance, Exclusions and Reintegration Manager</p>
Consultees & stakeholders	<p>Headteachers / Principals - schools PEP Strategic Board Members (includes all 14 MAT leads) Parents and carers</p>
Start Date	Late January/early February 2023
Target Completion Date	End of March 2023

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