

MINUTES of the meeting of the **EDUCATION AND SKILLS BOARD** held at 10.30 am on 24 November 2016 at Conference Room 1, County Hall, Penrhyn Road, Kingston upon Thames, KT1 2DN.

These minutes are subject to confirmation by the Board at its meeting on Wednesday, 8 March 2017.

Elected Members:

- Mrs Liz Bowes
- * Mr Mark Brett-Warburton (Chairman)
- * Mr Ben Carasco
- * Mrs Carol Coleman
- * Mr Robert Evans
- Mr Denis Fuller
- * Mr David Goodwin
- * Mrs Margaret Hicks
- * Mrs Marsha Moseley (Vice-Chairman)
- * Mr Chris Norman
- * Mr Wyatt Ramsdale
- * Mr Chris Townsend

Co-opted Members:

- * Mr Stephen Green, Diocesan Representative for the Anglican Church
- Mr Simon Parr, Diocesan Representative for the Catholic Church

Members in attendance

- * Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement
- * Mary Lewis, Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families

58/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS [Item 1]

Apologies were received from Liz Bowes, Denis Fuller and Simon Parr.

The Education and Skills Board welcomed Canon Dr Stephen Green to the Board

It was also noted that, as a result of a change in role, Peter Corns stepped down from the Board. It was stressed that the Surrey Governors Association was running an election to determine two new Parent Governor representatives.

59/16 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING: 15 SEPTEMBER 2016 [Item 2]

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as a true and accurate record of the previous meeting.

It was noted that Wyatt Ramsdale was present at the previous meeting

60/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST [Item 3]

There were no declarations of interest made.

61/16 QUESTIONS AND PETITIONS [Item 4]

There were no questions or petitions received.

62/16 RESPONSES FROM THE CABINET TO ISSUES REFERRED BY THE SCRUTINY BOARD [Item 5]

There were no responses from Cabinet.

63/16 RECOMMENDATION TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [Item 6]

The Board noted and approved the Forward Work Programme and Recommendations Tracker.

64/16 HENRIETTA PARKER TRUST UPDATE [Item 7]

Witnesses:

Paul Hoffman, Principal, Community Learning and Skills
Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement
Mary Lewis, Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families

Declarations of Interest:

None

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Officers noted the previous issues identified in the audit which criticised the utilisation of the Trust Fund. It was explained that the service had implemented a management board to aid in resolving these issues and noted that, as a result of this board's input, the Trust was utilising its funding more effectively.
2. The Officer noted that there was a positive number of enrolments so far in the academic year, highlighting an improvement in IT course take-up, as well as interest in other available courses. It was noted that the Trust had updated IT equipment in Molesey to improve the quality of service. It was also noted that the Trust was subsidising courses in Molesey with the aim of improving access for attendees. Members raised concerns regarding lower enrolment rates in Woking and Camberley. It was noted that there was a higher cost barrier for course attendees for IT courses which discouraged take up in these areas.
3. It was noted that if the service was targeting supporting 355 people into learning. Member's highlighted that this was a positive ambition.
4. The Officer informed Members that the service had undertaken a leafletting campaign to promote the Henrietta Parker Adult Learning

Centre. It was believed by Management Board that the high course enrolment at Molesey was a positive indicator of the success of this campaign and suggested that a similar campaign could be used for other comparable “paid-for” adult learning courses as a means of income generation. It was also noted that there was a high enrolment rate for new courses, such as cooking and the “Men’s Shed,” which were highlighted as positive.

5. The Board commended the positive progress that the Trust had made with regard to its course options. It was particularly noted that the involvement with the community was positive and that the service should be commended for the work undertaken and noted that it should continue.

Recommendations:

None.

65/16 SURREY EDUCATION IN PARTNERSHIP [Item 8]

Witnesses:

Simon Griffin, Programme Manager
Liz Mills, Assistant Director Schools & Learning
Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement
Mary Lewis, Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families

Declarations of Interest:

None

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Officers highlighted that this was an interim report on the development phase of the Surrey Education in Partnership (EiP) plan. It was noted that there had been positive feedback in discussions with key stakeholders to date. It was highlighted that school head teachers, local groups and partnerships had been invited to participate in the consultation process.
2. Officers reported that several key themes were highlighted in discussion with the stakeholders including: school improvement, recruitment, funding plans, governance and partnership development. Officers noted that, during consultation with stakeholders, there had been some tensions identified, which were a consequence of the blurred lines of authority resulting from increased school autonomy and governance changes.
3. Officers gave the Board assurance that school improvement would remain a requirement after changes to school governance arrangements. It was highlighted that seven “coasting” maintained schools were being targeted as part of the school improvement programme. It was stressed that there was scope for some improvement with regard to school peer support, particularly looking

into the option of providing support from Teaching Schools.

4. It was noted that the recently appointed Assistant Regional Schools Commissioner, Maria Dawes (RSC), was working closely with school governors and that there was a meeting of the Surrey Governors Association which the Assistant RSC was due to attend. It was highlighted that this close working relationship was key to maintaining accountability of schools.
5. The regional differences between funding for Surrey and the London Boroughs was highlighted as a concern by the Board, noting that Surrey County Council receives £450 less per pupil than average London boroughs. Officers noted that this issue was being queried by the service with central government to find a solution to this.
6. The Board suggested the need for Officers to engage more closely with Local and Joint Committees. Members explained that they could be useful to work in partnership with and would have strong local connections to schools, as well as being effective at engaging in an advisory and consultative role. Officers agreed that local committees would be a useful source for consultation and partnership and that they would attend meetings of the local committees in future to build a positive working relationship.
7. Officers noted that consultation with individual schools was key to understanding issues and pressures facing schools. It was also noted that this was useful to building key partnerships and working relationships with those schools. However, Officers pointed out that the service was working to balance the relationship between leadership and support for schools.

Robert Evans left the meeting at 11.17am

8. The Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement highlighted the work of the Spelthorne Education Partnership, noting that this was a successful partnership that could be emulated elsewhere in Surrey.
9. The Board queried whether the service worked closely with Area Education Officers and were informed that the Area Education Officers were leading on the consultation process.
10. Members suggested that Surrey's independent schools should be included as part of the consultation process and suggested that more work was required in this regard. Officers noted that they were looking into new methods of involving independent schools and would like to see a greater level of engagement from them in consultation.

Margaret Hicks left the meeting at 11.34am

11. Members asked Officers for details on future plans for the Partnership. Officers informed the Board that a draft Terms of Reference was to be taken to the Partnership Group for comment and approval. Officers also offered to share the draft Terms of Reference, along with

feedback from the group.

12. The Board raised concerns regarding budget pressures for both the Council and its maintained schools. Officers acknowledged that there were budgetary pressures which needed to be worked on and confirmed that Officers were working, with schools, to find the best sustainable solutions.

Robert Evans returned to the meeting at 11.38am

13. Members questioned whether the service could offer its financial expertise to schools. Officers noted that the service was looking into ways to potentially deliver this service. However, the Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement noted schools have other options for delivery of this service.

Recommendations:

1. The Board recommends that Officers provide the draft Terms of Reference document, with feedback from the Partnership Group.
2. The Board recommends that the Surrey Education in Partnership Programme engages with Local Committee Chairmen to determine in what way local committees can assist education in Surrey.

66/16 SEND TRANSPORT [Item 9]

Witnesses:

Gabrielle Close, Interim Head of SEND Operations
Robert Kitt, Senior Category Specialist
Liz Mills, Assistant Director Schools & Learning
Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement
Mary Lewis, Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families

Declarations of Interest:

None

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Officers highlighted that there had been a significant increase in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Transport costs. Officers had recognised a need for a more fundamental and joined-up change to the SEND Transport system was required and had commissioned a new team with a new programme, the SEND Transport Commissioning Programme October 2016, to resolve the underlying causes of this, while maintaining high standards of service.
2. Officers noted that this was a collaborative approach between the service, schools and partners; such as Family Voice. It was emphasised that the SEND Transport Commissioning Programme team was working closely with these stakeholders to find new

solutions to pilot in the first and second quarters of the next financial year, after further consultation has undertaken with schools.

3. Officers highlighted that the SEND Transport Commissioning Programme team was improving information sharing amongst partners and stakeholders of the Council as a result of the new co-ordinated system and it was agreed that there would be an ongoing process of improvement.
4. Officers explained to the Board that there were several potential new schemes that were being considered for pilots, including:
 - a. Schools commissioning their own transport services;
 - b. The leasing of a suitable vehicle to families;
 - c. The implementation of a Social Impact Bond (SIB) to help fund training for young people with SEND to use public transport independently; and
 - d. The utilisation of community transport organisations.
5. The Board queried the use of Social Impact Bonds and if there would be any cost savings from using “in-house” services. Officers noted that there were no available “in-house” staff to deliver the scheme, with specialist training, and that as a result this scheme would require external resources. The Board questioned whether the SEND Transport Commissioning Programme team could undertake a cost analysis of whether the training of staff or the implementation of a SIB would be more efficient.
6. Officers highlighted that cost savings had been made by undertaking a more thorough study into the needs of individual children as a result of the new co-ordinated system. It was also noted that a dynamic purchase system to improve competition between prospective providers was in place to improve cost savings.
7. It was questioned by Members whether there were any links with the County’s independent schools in relation to SEND Transport provision. Officers agreed that although the Transport Co-ordination Centre (TCC) work closely with independent schools already, there was more potential to be realised from the independent school sector.
8. Members questioned the high spend on SEND Transport per child in comparison to other Local Authorities. Officers highlighted that there was a large proportional number of children with complex SEND requirements in Surrey. Members queried whether it was possible for the service to provide a comparative breakdown of Surrey County Council and other comparable local authorities, to ascertain their provisions and if the service could adapt any of their provisions into their own offer.
9. Officers noted that Surrey offered children with SEND requirements a positive deal. Officers highlighted that this had led to more children with SEND requirements coming into the county than are leaving, presenting the service with a net gain of children with SEND requirements.

10. It was highlighted by officers that SEND Transport was required to meet targets set in the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and that the overspend had so far been reduced and that the service was aiming to be on target as part of the five year plan.
11. The Board queried whether the SEND Transport Commissioning Programme team could circulate to the Board the SEND Transport Commissioning Document, to highlight budget pressures and possible solutions. Officers agreed to circulate this information to the Board.
12. Officers highlighted that the service was working closely with parents of children and young people with SEND to look into their involvement with SEND Transport provision. It was also noted that the service would be working more to better determine the requirements of the individual child.
13. Officers assured the Board that children with SEND provisions that came from outside of Surrey were the responsibility of the Local Authority that they came from.
14. The Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement highlighted that they were confident with the direction of travel with regard to SEND Transport provision and were satisfied that the service was adopting a positive model for change.

Recommendations

1. The Board recommends that Officers provide a comparison chart of neighbouring and comparative local authorities and their provision of SEND Transport services, including: the total number and percentage of children and young people with SEND, the cost of SEND Transport services, and details of their local offer.
2. The Board recommends that Officers complete an evaluation of the pilot schemes to be launched in April 2017 before a wider implementation in September 2017, and in doing so, provide the Board with their findings and explain any modifications to the schemes.
3. The Board requests that Officers circulate the SEN Transport Commissioning Programme document.

67/16 CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) SERVICES IN SURREY [Item 10]

Witnesses:

Gabrielle Close, Interim Head of SEND Operations
Liz Mills, Assistant Director Schools & Learning
Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement
Mary Lewis, Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families

Declarations of Interest:

None

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Officers highlighted the lessons learnt from previous consultation practices. It was emphasised that this report was commissioned before the SEND CQC-Ofsted inspection, and therefore contains no information relating to that report, and came originally from the Board's last update on the Parent Guide for SEND Transport in September.
2. Officers highlighted the Parent Guide as an example of recent SEND consultation. Members questioned the scale of the guide's future circulation, with officers noting that it would reach approximately 5000 families. Members highlighted that the guide was useful and that the consultation methods due to be in place were good.
3. The Board questioned what constitutes as good practice within the service. Officers noted that good practice within the service was focussed upon wide ranging conversation with stakeholders. Members questioned whether officers could provide a list of stakeholders that were engaged by officers as part of this process.
4. Officers informed Members that the service was undertaking comparative analysis with other local authorities regarding how they engage with other Parent Carer Forums. Officers agreed to circulate comparisons of other operational models for local authorities with the Surrey model.
5. It was highlighted by Officers that some local authorities engage with a single statutory consultative body similar to Family Voice, however, it was emphasised that Surrey County Council consults with a wider range of organisations.
6. Officers highlighted that there was an ongoing challenge with regard to cultural change towards greater consultation and family participation. It was explained that this was a long term goal for the service.

Recommendations:

1. The Board requests that Officers share a stakeholder grid, explaining who the Service's key stakeholders are and why they are on the list.
2. The Board requests that Officers provide a comparative benchmarking document highlighting how other local authorities are handling their SEND Services and engagement, including details on other family partnership models, and the numbers of SEN residents they represent.
3. The Board requests a report on the Services continuing progress at the next meeting.

68/16 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC [Item 11]

The Chairman informed the Board that should any Member had wished to raise any matter relating to the Part 2 Annex [Item 8], that the meeting needed

to be taken into a Part 2 session.

The Board agreed for the item to be taken into Part 2, by virtue of paragraph(s) 3, Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person including the authority holding that information).

69/16 HENRIETTA PARKER TRUST UPDATE [PART 2] [Item 12]

Witnesses:

Paul Hoffman, Principal, Community Learning and Skills
Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement
Mary Lewis, Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. Members asked for a clarification regarding the accounts of the HPT, noting that some of the figures appeared to be erroneous.
2. Members questioned the level of funding being held in cash reserves. Officers responded that the Trust was working to resolve funding issues, and that this was a work in progress.
3. Members requested if there was a forecast available for the funds of the HPT for 2016/17. Officers agreed to circulate this to the Board.

Recommendations:

1. The Board recommends that the Henrietta Parker Trust Management Board has its finances for the 2015/16 financial year checked and corrected, then forwarded on to the Board again as a full account.
2. The Board requests a financial forecast for the 2016/17 financial year.

70/16 RECOMMENDATIONS TRACKER AND FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME [PART 2] [Item 13]

Witnesses:

Paul Hoffman, Principal, Community Learning and Skills
Linda Kemeny, Cabinet Member for Schools, Skills and Educational Achievement
Mary Lewis, Cabinet Associate for Children, Schools and Families

Key points raised in the discussion:

1. The Board was updated on the accounts of the Adult Learning Courses. The Board was satisfied with progress and had no questions relating to this.

Recommendations:

None

71/16 PUBLICITY OF PART TWO ITEMS [Item 14]

The Board concluded that the items referred to in the Part Two annex should not be made available to the public at this time.

72/16 DATE OF NEXT MEETING [Item 15]

The next full meeting of the Board will be held on 8 March 2017.

Meeting ended at: 12.42 pm

Chairman