

EDUCATION OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

31 March 2022 at 6.00 pm

In the Council Chamber at the Council House, Walsall

Committee Members present:

Councillor R. Burley
Councillor S. Ditta
Councillor S. Elson (in the Chair)
Councillor K. Ferguson
Councillor E. Lee
Councillor N. Gandham
Councillor S. Samra
Councillor R. Worrall

Portfolio Holders present: Councillor C. Towe – Education & Skills

Non-elected non-voting Members present:

Sharon Guy – Primary Teacher Representative

Wendy Duffus – Secondary Teacher Representative

Officers present:

Rob Thomas, Head of Access

Craig Goodall, Principal Democratic Services Officer

25/22 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received for Councillors S. Johal, Jeavons and Murphy.

As the Chair and Vice-Chair had submitted apologies the Principal Democratic Services Officer sought nominations for a Chair for the meeting. Councillor Elson was moved and duly seconded, therefore:

Resolved:

That Councillor Elson be appointed Chair for the duration of the meeting.

26/22 Substitutions

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

27/22 Declarations of interest and party whip

There were no declarations of interest or party whip for the duration of the meeting

26/22 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no agenda items requiring the exclusion of the public.

27/22 Update on Education Welfare Service (Attendance)

The Committee considered an update on attendance in schools.

The Portfolio Holder (Education & Skills) explained that attendance figures were reviewed every half term. He reported that attendance figures for 30 March had been 92.8% in Primary Schools and 94.9% in Secondary Schools. He noted that attendance figures had been affected significantly by the Covid-19 pandemic and the requirement to self-isolate with symptoms.

The Head of Access explained that monitoring attendance figures allowed data to be gathered and support to be provided to schools. He noted that absence affected attainment. It was possible to issue fixed penalty notices for absence if required.

In response to a question the Head of Access reported that nursery providers were required to have hygiene plans to assist in reducing the spread of Covid-19.

Resolved:

- 1) That the report be noted;**
- 2) An update on attendance at schools be received in the new municipal year.**

28/22 School Admissions Update

The Committee received an update on school admissions for September 2022.

The Portfolio Holder (Education & Skills) reported on admissions activity and highlighted how secondary school places had been allocated by preference as contained in the report (annexed). He highlighted that the current challenge for school capacity was managing a peak of secondary school admissions against a decrease in primary admissions.

The Head of Access added that it was pleasing to see an increase in parents receiving one of their allocated preferences and thanked secondary schools for making more places available to manage the spike in required number of places.

In response to a question the Head of Access explained how refugees from Ukraine may be supported if they came forward for assistance with admission to a school.

Resolved:

That the report be noted

29/22 Schools Funding Formula

The Committee were informed of the work undertaken to establish funding formulas for mainstream schools, high needs and early years for 2022/23.

The Portfolio Holder (Education & Skills) highlighted the funding blocks and their purposes. He reported that Cabinet had approved the funding formula for the new year following recommendations made by the Schools Forum.

Resolved:

- 1. That the report be noted;**
- 2. An update on school funding be received in the new municipal year.**

30/22 Work Programme 2021/22

Members received the Committee's Work Programme [Annexed].

Resolved:

That the Work Programme be noted.

31/22 Forward Plans

Members received and considered the Forward Plans of the Council and the Black Country Executive Joint Committee [Annexed].

Resolved:

That the Forward Plans be noted.

24/22 Date of next meeting

The next meeting would be held on Thursday 31 March 2022 at 6pm.

In closing the meeting the Portfolio Holder (Education & Skills) announced that he was stepping down from his role to undertake the role of Deputy Mayor. He thanked the Committee for their support during his time on Cabinet. Following this tributes were paid to the Portfolio Holder (Education & Skills) for his dedication and passion to the role.

There being no further business this meeting was terminated at 6.23 p.m.

Signed:

Date: