

EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Wednesday, 19 September 2018 commencing at 1.00 pm and finishing at 2.55 pm.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Michael Waine – in the Chair
Councillor John Howson (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor
Councillor Jeannette Matelot
Councillor Gill Sanders
Councillor Emma Turnbull
Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles (In place of Councillor Dr Suzanne Bartington)

Other Members in Attendance: Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, Cabinet Member for Education & Cultural Services.

By Invitation: Carole Thomson (Oxfordshire Governors' Association)
Ian Jones (Council of Oxfordshire Teachers' organisations (COTO)).

Officers:

Whole of meeting David Clarke, Deputy Director for Education, Deborah Miller and Lauren Rushen (Law & Governance).

Part of meeting

Agenda Item	Officer Attending
6	Lucy Butler, Director for Children's Services Varinder Raulia and Vaughan Burnard, Interim Consultant, Environment & Economy.
8	Kim James, Head of Learning and School Improvement.

The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes.

107/18 INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

(Agenda No. 1)

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the Meeting and in particular Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale, the new Cabinet Member for Education & Cultural Services, and Kim James, the new Head of Learning and School Improvement.

108/18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

(Agenda No. 2)

An apology for absence and temporary appointment was received as follows:

Apology	Substitution
Councillor Dr Suzanne Bartington	Councillor Hilary Hibbert-Biles

109/18 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 4)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 18 June 2018 were signed as a correct record of the meeting subject to the following amendments:

Minute 98/18 – 5th paragraph – replace ‘overllok’ with ‘overlook’
9th paragraph – replace ‘found’ with ‘find’.

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 27 June 2018 were approved and signed as a correct record of the Meeting subject to the following amendments:

Minute 101/18 – 9th paragraph - replace ‘dash board’ with ‘dashboard’
11th paragraph – replace ‘done’ with ‘completed’.

Minute 102/18 – insert the text ‘work’ in the resolution.

110/18 CARILLION RECOVERY PLAN - SCHOOL BUILDINGS

(Agenda No. 6)

At its meeting in June 2018, the Committee had received an initial update on the Council's response following the liquidation of Carillion. The Committee now had before it a report which provided a further update on the next phase of the plan which focused on an assessment of the Carillion legacy issues - including completing projects that were underway, defects on completed projects and the management of the longer-term project risks such as latent defects.

The report further provided an update on the progress with the assessments and the plans to establish a business-as usual-situation regarding these former Carillion projects.

Vaughan Burnard, Interim Head of Construction, and Varinder Raulia, Assistant Director Major Infrastructure Construction, attended to speak to the report and answer any questions the Committee might wish to ask.

In introducing the report, Mr Burnard explained that replacement contractors were now in place for all the in-flight projects and that most of the projects were now completed. The Property Service had maintained regular contact with stakeholders to ensure that they were aware of the replacement arrangements, including the timescales for completing works.

An assessment had been carried out in June in relation to the rectification of known defects, including consideration of optimal solutions for rectification. Costings and implementation plans would be considered by Cabinet in the Autumn as part of the budget setting process.

Urgent defect rectification had been carried out since Carillion's demise and c.£650k had been expended in doing so in order that schools affected could continue to operate. Although there were over 150 projects in the exercise, most were minimal in terms of scope. However, there were five key projects that required more substantial attention. They were:

- (1) Bodicote (Longford Park)
- (2) North West Bicester, (Gaglebrook)
- (3) Dicot, Great Western Park (Gems Academy)
- (4) McIntyre Academy SEN & Residential School (Endeavour/Ormerod)
- (5) Faringdon Junior School (Faringdon Academy)

He further explained that whilst it was important to note that correcting the defects was essential and would be undertaken as soon as possible, none of the projects presented a health and safety risk and therefore did not require immediate action.

In relation to the treatment of latent defects, he went on to explain that two options were being looked at: establishing an internal process to review Latent Defect claims from schools and if qualifying, correct them, funded by an OCC provision and a legal response to other parties in the OCC/Carillion contract to recover costs of OCC's defect clearance and ongoing latent defect liabilities.

The other area of concern Mr Burnard drew the Committee's attention to was the Schools Estate. It had become increasingly clear through the Carillion legacy assessment, audit work direct contact between schools and the Property Service that the position on repairs and maintenance of schools needed to be more fully assessed and quantified. Maintenance was currently delegated to schools and only became an OCC issue in rare cases where certain structural repairs were required that could be legitimately funded from the Schools Structural Maintenance Programme Budget.

There were questions around the effectiveness of this approach especially where school funding was not being used to maintain new facilities provided by the council. Whether OCC remit or Academy remit, they were all de facto OCC liability in the event of Academy failure. It was therefore proposed to commission a joint review to consider the condition of schools and the approach to maintaining them in the future. This was likely to result in an OCC-managed annual property review for all Schools in Oxfordshire.

During discussion Members made the following points:

Members expressed the importance of keeping members informed of progress on schools within their divisions individually as well as through forums such as the schools forum, locality meetings etc;

Members further asked to see the priority list that had been requested back in April undertaken, and that a building condition survey of all schools in Oxfordshire be undertaken as soon as possible to assess the scale of work required. It was noted that many schools/academies had recently undertaken comprehensive surveys and a suggestion was made that officers approach the schools for copies of these before spending additional money in commissioning their own surveys.

RESOLVED: to:

- (a) note the progress in relation to the Recovery Plan;
- (b) note and comment on the proposed joint review on the maintenance of the schools' estate;
- (c) receive a further update on progress in six months.

111/18 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) STRATEGY (Agenda No. 7)

The Committee received a presentation (a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the minutes) from the Deputy Director for Education on the draft Special Educational Needs and Disability Strategy which had been developed to ensure the right type of special education provision was in the right place to meet the needs of Oxfordshire's growing population; to enhance support for Oxfordshire's mainstream schools to provide inclusive education; and to increase the effectiveness of the use of the High Needs budget to better meet the needs of children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities.

In introducing the presentation, Deputy Director for Education, David Clarke, explained that the vision of the Strategy was that investing in and developing good quality local provision which met the need of children and young people with SEND within Oxfordshire – the right pupils in the right provision at the right place.

Oxfordshire County Council had a whole-hearted commitment to investing in and developing schools' SEND provision for the children of Oxfordshire. The 'local first' approach would ensure that children and young people's needs were at the core of our service planning. He further announced that they had appointed a new Head of SEND, Ms Jayne Howarth to oversee the process.

Oxfordshire was proud of the SEND education provision that was currently being delivered which enabled more children and young people with SEND to access local provision. The future programme and creative approaches were enabling the work to expand and deliver even better outcomes.

He further outlined the challenges the council faced including the changing needs of SEND children, Mental Health issues, the need for better outcomes for mainstream schools, fixed term exclusions of children with SEND, together with:

- Insufficient places
- Increase in demand
- High Needs Block funding pressures
- OFSTED and Statutory requirements

The Committee noted that the Council maintained overall responsibility for SEND in all schools including academies, and that, whilst the Council were unable to impose the Strategy on all schools, it was now written into the specification for all new schools.

Mr Clarke, during the presentation set out proposals to support the Council's mainstream schools, particularly around assessments, including: the integration of the high needs project; funding following the child in order to support schools keeping the child; SEND advisors; and a Countywide admission panel to establish where the need was around the County.

The Chairman reiterated the need to keep pressure up on the high needs block funding, as Oxfordshire remained very low in comparison to Buckinghamshire and suggested that he write again to the Government to lobby them in relation to the low funding.

Carole Thomson reported that she was a member of the F40 Executive which had a parliamentary lobby on the 15 October 2018 and that she would email the representative to ensure that the high needs block formed a part of that.

RESOLVED:

- (a) to note the report and ask officers to report back progress in six months;
- (b) ask the Chairman and Cabinet Member for Education and Cultural Services to write jointly to MPs regarding the continuing underfunding of the high needs block funding in Oxfordshire.

112/18 PRELIMINARY SUMMER RESULTS

(Agenda No. 8)

The Committee received a brief presentation (a copy of which is attached to the signed copy of the minutes) on outcome trends at each key stage, including work in progress on raising standards across all key stages to raise the number of good and outstanding schools in Oxfordshire and to raise the percentage of students reaching the 'standard' at all key stages to achieve 'Good schools for all pupils.'

Initial results indicated that the trend of improvement year on year continued, and officers anticipated to see the impact of focused work carried out in KS1 Reading and Writing and that the proportion of children reaching a good level of development continued to be above that nationally. However, the Head of Learning and School Improvement explained that many schools were yet to supply their exam data.

The Chairman indicated that the Committee had identified the lack of data sharing from schools to be an ongoing issue and with the agreement of the Deputy Director for Children's Services, undertook to write to schools to encourage them to submit their examination data to the authority and to encourage them to sign up to the data sharing protocol that was being developed by the Deputy Director for Education and if schools still did not share their data, to escalate it where necessary to the Trustees.

The Committee requested that, when all the data was in and officers brought a detailed report came back to the Committee, for the locality data to be school-by-school data. The Committee further suggested that all members of the Council be invited when the data is presented to the Committee.

113/18 THE SWAN SCHOOL UPDATE

(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee had requested an update in relation to the Planning Decision for the Swan School in Marston.

Accordingly, David Clarke, Deputy Director Education, attended the Meeting to provide an update and answer any questions the Committee may wish to ask.

Mr Clarke, in introducing the item, explained that unfortunately, due to the sensitivity of the situation and the uncertainty over whether the proposed school would get planning permission in time to open in 2019, there was not much to report on at the current time.

He went on to explain that officers were unable to provide specific details at this time as they were in meetings with the Education and Skills Funding Agency and those meetings were complex and difficult meetings with multiple threads to the negotiations. He assured the Committee that officers were currently working with existing schools to plan contingency arrangements and looking at all temporary options should it become necessary and that urgent negotiations with ESFA had started to advance the situation.

The Committee expressed concern over the admissions process for the Swan School. The OCC website had referred to an alternative admissions process for the school and referred parents to the Swan School Website. However, no application process had appeared on the Swan School Website and the link on the River Learning Trust Website was broken. Members felt that the Council had a duty of care to ensure that the admissions process for any school should be available for day one of the admissions process.

The Committee also noted that Oxford university had announced a new graduate college was due to open with over 800 graduate spaces, some of which would be bringing children which could potentially impact on the Swan School numbers and place planning.

The Deputy Director undertook to look into putting something on the website in response to these points.

114/18 FORWARD PLAN AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS

(Agenda No. 10)

Members considered the forward programme of items and agreed items for the December and March meetings as shown below (changes shown in bold italics and strikethrough). Due to the extent of Items on the forward plan, it was agreed that the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and Labour spokesperson, together with officers would scope and move items to fit in with when data and officer resource was available.

28 November 2018		
School absence and attendance	Recommendations from the committee working group on improving school attendance	Cllr Michael Waine Deferred
Children and Family Centres and Locality Community Support Services	To present the findings of the monitoring investigations undertaken by members of the Committee following on from the presentation in July 2018	Cllr Michael Waine/Area Social Care Manager
Pupil Place Planning 2018-2014	To receive a report about pupil place planning	Head of School Organisation and Sufficiency/Director of Education
School attainment	To agree the scope of the deep dive into educational attainment, particularly the attainment of vulnerable learners at secondary schools and to agree the membership of the working group	Cllr John Howson/Policy Officer
Northfield School Update		
6 February 2019		
Educational Attainment Report 2018	To receive a report on the validated education attainment results across all Key Stages to include positive issues to highlight and areas to be addressed moving forward	Head of Learning and School Improvement/Performance Information Manager
LA's new relationship with schools	To help shape an evolving relationship with schools and colleges. This presentation is intended to act as a planning session for the Committee for the forthcoming Council Year.	Director for Education
Children and Family Centres and Locality Community Support Services	To present the findings of the monitoring investigations undertaken by members of the Committee following on from the presentation in	Cllr Michael Waine/Area Social Care Manager

	July 2018	
Exclusions Update		
SEND Review		
Carillion Update		
3 April 2019		
Regional Schools Commissioner	To undertake a question and answer session with the Regional Schools Commissioner	Cllr Michael Waine
To be scheduled		
Closing the gap (vulnerable learners)	Pathways to raising the attainment of vulnerable pupils (best practice), current provision of support, an overview of the profile of vulnerable learners	
Looked After Children educational attainment	A review of attainment for a particular vulnerable group	
Demographic trends	Planning for school places and supporting families with English as an additional language	
Disparity in educational outcomes across Localities	Profile of educational outcomes across Oxfordshire – sharing learning across the county.	
Schools funding formula	Potentially a task group reporting back to ESC	
Educational Attainment	Recommendations from the committee working group on improving educational performance	Cllr John Howson

..... in the Chair

Date of signing