

## EDUCATION SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Monday, 17 June 2019 commencing at 1.00 pm and finishing at 3.45 pm.

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Michael Waine – in the Chair  
Councillor John Howson (Deputy Chairman)  
Councillor Ted Fenton  
Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor  
Councillor Jeannette Matelot  
Councillor Gill Sanders  
Councillor Emma Turnbull

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillor Lorraine Lindsay-Gale

**By Invitation:** Mr Donald McEwan, Council of Oxfordshire Teachers' Association (COTO) and Mrs Carole Thomson (Oxfordshire Governors' Association).

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting Diane Cameron and Deborah Miller (Resources) and Kim James (Children's Services).

Part of meeting Deborah Bell and Allyson Milward (Children's Services).

*The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with a document containing questions for the RSC tabled at the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and report/additional documents are attached to the signed Minutes.*

### **137/19 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2019/20 COUNCIL YEAR**

(Agenda No. 1)

Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald O'Connor moved and Councillor Ted Fenton seconded that Councillor Michael Waine be elected Chairman of the Education Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

There being no further nominations or dissent, Councillor Waine was duly elected Chairman of the Education Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

**RESOLVED:** accordingly.

### **137/19 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2019/20 COUNCIL YEAR**

(Agenda No. 1)

Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald O'Connor moved and Councillor Ted Fenton seconded that Councillor Michael Waine be elected Chairman of the Education Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

There being no further nominations or dissent, Councillor Waine was duly elected Chairman of the Education Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

**RESOLVED:** accordingly.

### **138/19 ELECTION OF DEPUTY CHAIRMAN FOR THE 2019/20 COUNCIL YEAR**

(Agenda No. 2)

Councillor Gill Sanders moved and Councillor Jeannette Matelot seconded that Councillor John Howson be elected Deputy Chairman of the Education Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

There being no further nominations or dissent, Councillor Howson was duly elected Deputy Chairman of the Education Scrutiny Committee for the 2019/20 Council Year.

**RESOLVED:** accordingly.

### **139/19 MINUTES**

(Agenda No. 5)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 25 March 2019 were approved and signed as an accurate record of the Meeting subject to substituting 'right' to 'write' in Minute 131/19.

Matters Arising:

Minute 132/19 – The Chairman indicated that he would be arranging to meet with Deborah Bell for an initial discussion on this issue and then discuss it further under the forward plan item at the next meeting in September.

Minute 133/19 – The Committee asked officers to provide the update in relation to St. Andrews School Chinnor (recommendation b) as soon as possible.

### **140/19 REGIONAL SCHOOLS COMMISSIONER**

(Agenda No. 7)

The Committee welcomed the Interim Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) for North London and the South-East Region, Dame Kate Dethridge and the Regional Lead, Mr Tom Gregory to the Meeting for a question and answer session regarding the role of the RSC, its relationship with other statutory bodies and how the RSC approached support to academies in areas such as attainment and finance.

By way of introduction the Interim Director gave a brief overview of the work carried out by her office. The Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) covered North West London and South Central which covered 27 local authority areas from North London to Northampton. The RSC supported schools in difficulty in finding supporting sponsors; supported Multi Academy Trust development, school improvement and school grants. In terms of powers, their main focus was on the schools which were judged inadequate, at the point the RSC became involved to find that school a suitable Trust. The RSC established, developed and maintained relationships and believed in working in collaboration to achieve a best solution for schools and children. In relation to Oxfordshire's current challenges remained around Recruitment and retention. The Secretary of State was committed support it and a number of different strategies encouraging schools to look at how they got staff into the school and then to retain and advance them, including a new free website for schools to use.

During questions and discussion, the following points were made:

***One of the continuing areas of interest to us is you see your relationship with Ofsted and other bodies evolving with your office, is it one of partnership or is it one of operating in different areas?***

The relationship we have with the EFSA and Ofsted is very much collaboration and partnership and we work very hard to achieve it. We work very closely with the EFSA, who have responsibility around funding and to some degree safeguarding. We work together sharing information, best practice and guidance, working together to support our trusts and stand alones.

Ofsted are an independent group and have to be, so we ensure there is 'clear blue water' between what we do and Ofsted do, our involvement comes after Ofsted have been in to schools and we make sure there is no confusion around that. We do hold many conversations with Ofsted, particularly around the roles which may be coming out of the new expected framework.

***There seems to be a lot of 'mist and fog' about the expectation on local authorities from Government, and it does seem to be that when there is blame to be laid it is on local authorities and when there is accolade to be given it tends to be others, we seem to pick up more difficult areas when it is politic to do so, do you think there is a need nationally to give greater definitions to expectations and responsibilities?***

I can only talk about my relationships with Oxfordshire, and I hope that my colleagues would confirm that we have a very positive and open dialogue. We meet formally 3 or four times a year to discuss what's happening around maintained schools and trusts and academies and education more broadly. Ofsted also invite us to meetings to discuss issues. I certainly don't recognise any incidents where we have wanted to attribute blame and I have noticed over the past three years is that we have very honest, open and frank discussions and we all have the best interest of Oxfordshire's children at heart.

***Ofsted is separate and has a random way of selecting which schools to inspect, particularly outstanding schools, but who between yourself and the***

***EFSA, takes the lead in encouraging support and ensuring that attainment is continuously being driven upwards in academies?***

It may appear that Ofsted system of inspection is random, but they have a very careful way of deciding who is to be inspected, except from outstanding schools who under the current rules might be inspected but not necessarily. EFSA, broadly have responsibility for finances and ensuring that schools are as they should be and some responsibility around safeguarding. In terms of performance, the responsibility lies with the Trust, but the role of the RSC is to meet regularly with trusts or stand-alone schools whose pupil performance either around progress or attainment is a cause for concern.

***Do you have a responsibility to inform Ofsted if say a successful school in progress 8 for vulnerable learners is going backwards for the last two to three years or is that the responsibility of trust or stand-alone school?***

Ofsted receive the data of pupil performance so they will be well aware of under-performance in a school or trust, but if when we had a meeting with Ofsted we might discuss when there is cause of concern around a three-year trend. We might however report a safeguarding issue to Ofsted.

***Where does recruitment and retention fit into this, as we know for instance that school direct salaries have been going down in Secondary schools in the last two to three years. What influence or effective controls do either you or EFSA have, to do anything about recruitment and retention?***

The Department for Education more widely, outside of the RSC office and the EFSA are looking at recruitment and retention as a Secretary of State priority, developing strategies and tools to improve the situation. In terms of the powers that the RSC and EFSA have over recruitment and retention, we have limited control over that. What we can do, through our conversations with trusts and schools, is to share best practice. Some trusts have very structured frameworks to see staff advance right from NQT.

We also recognise that when you talk to people who are leaving or thinking of leaving the profession, that work load pays a significant part of the reasons why people are leaving. So, we are really mindful of what we ask for from schools and trusts. When we have our meetings with schools and trusts we always say, please don't prepare anything additional.

***There will be a number of new schools in Oxfordshire over the next few years. Planning teacher supply numbers - how do you ensure that we have good operating practices in Oxfordshire and that we do not have significant gaps in training on certain subjects or primary school teacher training. What role does the RSC play?***

The RSC have little or no role in this area, this falls to the DfE more widely. We could report the local authorities concerns around teacher training to the DfE.

***In July 2018 the Headteachers Board agreed the merger of the 2 Catholic MACs in Oxfordshire - what is the current situation with this?***

That is moving forward, there is a lot of detail and it has to be done very sensitively, but I can you that we are on track to be completed by the 1 September and I can reassure you that there is School Improvement Support in place.

***There was an expectation at the other County Council that Catholic Aided Schools would be subsumed by the new MAC is that part of the timescale that you have indicated?***

We would want to work closely with the MAC to ensure anything that they do would be sustainable in the long term and that that the way it is being done is best for the schools involved.

***How far are you aware of schools struggling financially, and what are the plans to support them? Such as reducing their working week or asking donations from parents.***

When we look at our schools and trusts we see a mixed picture, some schools and some trusts are manging reasonably well and some are finding it more challenging. We need to do all we can to support trusts and schools to make sure that they are in the position to give the best service to their children. For instance, the EFSA have put a lot of support in place. There is the schools resource management programme that brings together a range of different tools to support schools and trusts, there is the financial benchmarking service, so that schools can see their spend and compare it to other schools and trusts all of which are free to use. We have the list of agencies that offer recommended deals for efficiencies in purchasing, and there is a teacher vacancy list which schools can use for free and save money on recruitment.

We have School Management Resource Advisors that can come into schools to spend time alongside staff seeing if there are areas where savings or efficiencies could be made and evidence is that schools using that service have found it extremely useful.

Schools closing early - we would be uncomfortable with schools doing anything that may see children or families disadvantaged and so we would want to have conversations with schools suggesting something like that to understand it.

***Do you think that the RSC should work with the EFSA to look at three-year balanced budgets as our understanding is that schools do ok in year one, but by year three the school is unrecognisable due to the level of cuts. Are you aware of trends within schools of moving revenue into capital to do sizable works within schools taking away from children's everyday 'bread and butter money'?***

We certainly look at their budget planning and have conversations to see if there is any kind of deficit that they see coming or is in place and part of the reason we look at 3 years is so that we can be in position to support the school or trust as soon as

possible. The EFSA come to the trust business meetings so that they are also in place to have the conversations with the trusts.

If trusts are putting in information that suggests they are struggling moving forward that is when we would meet with them.

***Transferred revenue to capital – How much of a problem is it of schools transferring money that comes in for revenue to a reserved capital for future projects?***

I am not in a position to comment on that at this stage, but I am happy to take your question back to the EFSA and get you an answer.

***With schools struggling to find the 1% for the increased salary award, what's the likelihood for increased funding for the higher employer contribution to the teachers' pension scheme?***

Unfortunately, this is something that sits outside of the RSC remit, what we are more than willing to do is to raise your concern with the appropriate department.

***Given the rules about closing rural schools, what's the thinking within RSC about deficit budgets in small rural primary schools and the way forward?***

We can't comment on maintained schools that's a policy issue for local authorities, but if it was an academy we would be working very closely with the trust if they had indicated there was any deficit.

***There is clearly a policy issue here for an authority like Oxfordshire, there is a very large number of community based rural primary schools in a time when the birth rate is beginning to decline and the housing rate is going through very unusual patterns. The fact that some of these are academies, but the majority are maintained schools, causes a problem, unless somebody can take the lead to ensure that schools in the primary sector are represented going forward in their communities. Can you comment on how that policy should be developed in a mixed economy?***

You do have many rural areas with very small primary schools, often with mix year teaching. What is really important here is to ask the question "is this a going concern; is it viable; can it work on the money you are receiving in terms of: can you afford to pay all the staff you need to support the school; can you work with the income that you have and if the answer is no, then I think there are some potentially very difficult decisions that need to be made about whether or not a local authority or academy trust can support a small school. These are very difficult decisions, but ones that need to be made if the money just isn't there.

We recognise that small rural primary schools are not there just to educate children, they're often the heart of the community such as shops or cinemas, we absolutely recognise their position in the community.

***The DfE has a policy and a long list of schools with presumption against closure, many of which are in Oxfordshire. How does the RSC advise the academy to do deal with that? Many of our small rural schools are facing with financial unviability.***

In trusts what we are particularly looking at, we are not just looking at one small school, we are often looking at a collection of 20 to 30 small schools in any trust or across 4 or 5 trusts, what we are looking at is how the trusts ensure that the schools remain viable.

There are loads of innovative measures that the trusts are using such as Executive Headships to cut costs of providing a head teacher at every school. I recognise that parents like to see a head at a school, but if that is not viable schools need to look at ways of sharing staff across schools, to using collective bargaining powers with external providers to drive down cost. This is where our SRMA are incredibly useful in going into trusts.

***It seems to me we are in a position where the RSC and the local authority have an area of mutual interest and concern and do you think coming together on this to have a very real debate on how this can be addressed with a view to maintaining these schools in their communities would be a good idea, would you make a commitment to that?***

I would certainly make a commitment to continuing the dialogue and perhaps talking to some people in the department who know more about this than we do about small rural school policy. We certainly, in this local authority have examples of trusts that take in small rural schools and do it very well and are finally efficient. We are very happy to collaborate and share those examples with you.

***MATs - enhanced funding/staffing helps schools out of Special Measures, but when this is done, staff are often lost due to lower funding. What is the RSC thinking on this issue?***

What a MAT will receive, when taking on an inadequate school, is a sponsor grant to enable them to support the school, I don't recognise what you are saying as an issue. How the trust uses the grant is up to them, if they were using that for recruitment they would sustain that over the long term.

Typically, the money is offered to support the staff that are already in the school to improve as opposed to putting more teachers in and the removing them.

***Maths KS2 progress data is a limiting factor in Oxfordshire schools; how could the RSC support us / work with us to improve this?***

That trend in data is something we would pick up with schools and trusts when we meet them, if we saw any kind of underperformance in any subject we would discuss with them what they do; what kind of strategies they had in place and how they collaborated with other people to find best practice.

***Do you have any examples of good practice?***

We worked with Northamptonshire, and in particular their teaching schools to develop a day for teachers from academies and maintained schools to come together to look at best practice and what could be done. What we expect from our trusts is that they are constantly restless, thinking about what could be done better and a great place to start is the Education Down Foundation which is a free website, with a section called 'what works well' where there is lots of information and research to do with primary and secondary education.

The teaching school association work collaboratively and that is the kind of thing they would look at.

***Had you notice our maths was not good?***

We look at the data alongside the local authority.

***Regulations mean that the county council has responsibility for pupil place planning, but no powers, which has lately resulted in a delayed new school funding agreement and unnecessary worry for parents, and work for officers. Oxfordshire has 5 new schools due to open in 2020; how can you support Authorities in ensuring the process moves forward in time?***

That comes back again to working very collaboratively, and if appeared that on either side there was a problem, we would do whatever we could do to ensure that parents were not upset and that new provision opened smoothly and on time, drawing on past experience.

***We can't be alone in authorities that fall within your Region, and what I would ask you to do is join with us in telling government that the Regulations within this area need to be looked at seriously and immediately, so that new schools' plans can be put in place, rather than being side lined by the regulations. It has happened with the Swan School and we are fearful of it happening again in the future.***

If you send us a note, we can definitely action that.

***Will the RSC suggest to SofS to set up a direct whistleblowing line so staff can report financial and other maladministration within all academies and MATs including stand-alones?***

We currently have a system, where the EFSA can be and are contacted on such things, our concern is that it is not known about or used widely enough. We also at the RSC office have a mailbox that can be used for concerns such as that, but I am happy to take it back, but we do already have that function in place, but if it is not widely enough known about, we will raise that with the EFSA.



***How would you see that being made known?***

For academies and stand alone we have a newsletter to all our trusts and schools, so it could be included in that, but I will raise it with the EFSA and give some thought to how we could make more people aware.

***How does the RSC support inclusion and tackle high exclusions?***

Inclusion is very important to us and is high up on our Agenda. If there are any examples of where we have it reported to us, that any trust or school is not as inclusive as it ought to be, or indeed there are high exclusions, that is something we would raise with the school or trust.

In terms of the meetings we have with the trusts and schools, we always do look at things such as exclusion rates, and if they seem high, it might be that there is good reason for that, but we would certainly want to know and we would raise it with them.

When we meet with local authorities, 3 times a year, if they have any anecdotal evidence of schools or trusts not behaving as they should, then they always raise it with us and then we take that forward.

***Where do you think Oxfordshire ranks with other county authorities within the Region on exclusions, particularly in the secondary sector?***

I would not be able to give you that information off the top of my head now, but I am happy to provide you with a written answer.

***Have you noticed any particular causes for high exclusions in the schools you have been working with, we are concerned here about child exploitation?***

We haven't looked in detail at that, but that is certainly something that I would want to find out more about, so we will add it to the Agenda for our next local authority meeting.

Following the question and answer session, the Chairman thanked Dame Kate Ethridge and Mr Gregory for their attendance and openness and stressed that the Committee was keen to maintain the good working relationship established between the County Council and the Regional Commissioner's Office.

**141/19 NEW SCHOOLS BUILDING PROGRAMME**

(Agenda No. 8)

At its last Meeting, the Committee had requested an update on the new schools building programme in the County. The Committee had before it a report (ESC8) which set out the up to date position of the capital building programme for new schools in Oxfordshire to 2023.

Mrs Milward reported that plans were advanced for all the September 2020 Schools and that the delivery of the other schools would be subject to occupation of houses in

the new developments. The Council did not control the delivery of ESFA led projects but worked with its partners to secure and meet this demand.

In relation to the swan school, members expressed concern that the transport action plan for the site to ensure that there were no issues in terms of vehicle movements had not been produced, although it had been required at planning application stage and should have been submitted prior to any work starting.

The Committee noted that the late opening of the Swan school had meant that many families had not known where their children were attending school until the last minute and that there were lessons to be learnt around communication with parents in the future.

Mrs Milward indicated that officers were aware of the situation and were in discussions with the EFSA to try to rectify the situation.

**RESOLVED:** The Committee noted that at present no delay was expected on the delivery of any of the projects.

## **142/19 ANNUAL ACADEMIES IN OXFORDSHIRE REPORT**

(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee had before it a report (ESC9) which identified and analysed trends in the Academies Programme during 2018, and indicated changes from those noted in 2017. Mrs Milward introduced the report and drew the Committee's attention to the following highlights from the data:

Following the dramatic rise in conversion in 2017 (23 academy conversions), 2018 saw an average number of conversions over the last ten years, with 11 completed during the year. 82% (9) of the conversions in 2018 were primary schools, 18% (2) of the conversions were secondary schools.

There were 144 academies including new Free Schools and Studio Schools in Oxfordshire at 31 December 2018. 13 more than in 2017 (11 conversions and two new schools).

As of December 2018, there were 155 maintained schools, including seven LA Maintained Nursery Schools and nine special schools. 85 had a religious designation (either Church of England, Archdiocese of Birmingham (RC) or Diocese of Portsmouth (RC). The average size of LA Maintained schools was 210, with 44 schools (28%) having less than 100 pupils on roll.

Approximately 62% of the total Oxfordshire pupil population were now educated in academies, with 97% of secondary pupils attending an academy.

There remained marked differences in volume of academy conversions between locality areas.

Conversions to academy status were at average rate of approximately 1 per month in 2018 down from 2 per month in 2017.

There were no new MATS established in 2018 in Oxfordshire, all schools converting in 2018 joined an established MAT.

Multi-Academy Trusts were maturing and, in some cases, merging with others to become more sustainable units in terms of both school improvement and financial security.

Church of England schools have a number of options for joining a MAT in the county. Catholic schools in Oxfordshire may still only convert to academy status with other catholic schools.

In 2018 four primary schools, judged by Ofsted to have serious standards issues, were issued Directed Academy Orders. Three converted to sponsored academy status with an established Oxfordshire based MAT, and one from Reading.

The pool of sponsors available to support under performing schools in Oxfordshire remained the same in 2018. The need to identify more sponsors was a challenge nationally. However, the supply of sponsors in Oxfordshire remained good and officers have intimated to the RSC that there is potential from within trusts operating in the county to meet the need to support schools with standards issues.

A managed system continued to ensure schools convert with all business issues relating to the Council set out in transfer documentation. The cost per conversion to the Council remained approximately £12,000.

As part of the programme to meet savings required across Council services, a one-off contribution to the costs of the Council per conversion has been levied on converting schools since 1 April 2016. This was set at £6,000 per school and was met from the DfE grant to them to meet costs of the conversion process.

Following discussion with Schools Forum and all schools and academies the local authority adopted the national funding formula criteria for allocating funding to its schools and academies from 1 April 2018.

The authority must provide revenue funding to new academies in the preopening stage and during the time it took for the school to be open in all year groups. This will be a significant amount as new academies open. A Growth Fund to meet this expenditure was created and funded one school in 2016 and two in 2017, and a further two in 2018. There will be more schools opening in 2020 and 2021.

The Council would always be consulted on any proposal from an external bidder to set up a new academy in Oxfordshire as the responsible body for strategic pupil place planning. It may choose to work actively with proposers if the places were required and offer a cost-effective approach to meeting basic need and increased diversity of choice in the area.

All new provision schools were now designated as Free schools and may be provided either through the Local Authority led 'Presumption' process or through a

'central' (DfE-led) process whereby sponsors can make direct bids to open new schools to Secretary of State.

Following debate, the Committee made the following points:

The Chairman indicated that the Committee would wish to pursue the Regional School Commissioner offer to look at the future of Oxfordshire's small rural schools to see what could be done to keep them open.

Ms Milward reported that officers had been undertaking some analysis on this issue, including talking to Headteachers and Governors to look at ways of saving money such as joint head teachers or Governance. Barbara Chillman, Pupil Place Manager would be visiting all the schools and putting plans in place to sustain them.

The Committee requested that it be kept informed regarding Oxfordshire's involvement in the DfE's DSG funding unit task group which had been set up to meet the authorities' responsibility to provide revenue support funding to new academies, both in pre-opening stage and during the time it takes for the school to be open to all year groups. Mrs Milward reported that officers were currently in discussion with the DfE on this issue and would report back to the Committee or to the Schools Forum Committee in the Autumn.

The Committee noted that four schools had been judged by Ofsted to have serious standards issues and therefore had been issued with Directed Academy Orders. The Committee queried whether officers had spotted any patterns or had any reflections on whether there were any lessons to be learnt.

Kim James, Head of Learning and School improvement confirmed that officers had noted a pattern around safeguarding and that action was being taken to address the issues, including briefing all schools.

**RESOLVED:** The Committee noted the findings of the report.

## **143/19 POST 16 RESULTS AND EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING DATA**

(Agenda No. 10)

At a previous meeting, the Committee had identified a concern around post 16 Education, particularly around Studio Schools and UTC's and pupils appearing "to go missing" in Year 13. The Committee had before it a report (ESC10) which gave an overview of 16-18 attainment in Oxfordshire, together with destinations of pupils following Key Stage 5.

During debate, the Committee made the following observations:

The Committee welcomed the fact that the 16-18 Apprentice rate and Pupils in Education, Employment and Training was above the national average.

The number of pupils taking modern languages was very low, although in line with national average. The Committee noted that the Ofsted focus on the wider curriculum may improve the numbers.

The Committee noted that there would be greater scrutiny from Ofsted of A 'Level and apprentice pupils going forward.

The Committee noted the importance of Oxfordshire encouraging all entry criteria after GCSE.

The Committee noted that the percentage of pupils claiming pupil premium remained a concern with only 8% claiming in Early Years.

**RESOLVED:** The Committee thanked the Head of Learning and School improvement for the update and requested the data on sustained education and employment for disadvantaged pupils for the last 3 years.

#### **144/19 UPDATE ON NORTHFIELD SCHOOL POST-OFSTED INSPECTION WORK AND PROGRESS**

(Agenda No. 11)

The Committee received a brief verbal update on Northfield School. Kim James, Head of Learning and Improvement reported that following the inadequate outcome of the inspection by Ofsted in November which found the Local Authority plan fit for purpose, but the school plan not fit for purpose, the Authority were now expecting Ofsted to inspect in September. Officers were also awaiting decision from the Headteachers' Trust as to which Multi Academy Trust Northfield would join.

#### **145/19 FAIR ACCESS PROTOCOL**

(Agenda No. 12)

At its last Meeting, the Committee had requested an update following the revision of Oxfordshire's In Year Fair Access Protocol. The Committee had before them a report (ESC12) which set out the revised protocol, together with plans for the development of an Alternative Provision Commissioning Strategy.

Deborah Bell, Head of Learner Engagement reported that the purpose of Fair Access Protocols was to ensure that - outside the normal admissions round - unplaced children, especially the most vulnerable, were found and offered a school place quickly, so that the amount of time any child was out of school was kept to the minimum. Oxfordshire County Council policy stated that all children must be placed on school rolls within 15 days. This was why Oxfordshire and every local authority was required to have in place a Fair Access Protocol, developed in partnership with local schools.

Following the Members deep dive into exclusions in 2018, the In Year Fair Access Protocol was reviewed by OCC officers and secondary school Headteachers and inclusion leaders from across the county in a task and finish group convened for this purpose. Working with the Oxfordshire Secondary Headteachers Association,

Headteachers were consulted about changes during the review process. This raised awareness of the reasons for placing children in a timely fashion and schools' responsibilities in this. The reviewed document was put out to consultation for all schools (including primary schools) and published for implementation from 1 April 2019.

School leaders and LA officers needed to work together to ensure places were offered in a fair manner in accordance to the Admissions Code 2014. The Code gave local authorities and schools, including Academies, the freedom to develop and agree Protocols which best serve the needs of children in their area. It was for participating schools to ensure that the local Protocol worked for them and was reviewed as required with the LA. Participation was mandatory for all state funded mainstream schools.

Reducing exclusion of children from school remained a focus for all stakeholders in the area. This included the number of children needing school places following permanent exclusion through In Year Fair Access processes.

Inclusion processes had also been reviewed with key stakeholders alongside the In Year Fair Access Protocol. This has resulted in new terms of reference for the meetings, new processes that support schools to work together across the county to cultivate inclusive practices and challenge exclusive practices involving key partners from Policy, Health and Social Care.

Since Easter 6 Children had been placed in the Fair Access Protocol. All six had been placed.

The Committee welcomed the content of the protocol and made the following points during discussion:

In relation to Fair Access Panels, the Committee questioned whether there was any opportunity for a split between North and West Oxfordshire as West Oxfordshire seemed to participate to a much greater extent.

The Committee questioned what work was being carried out to address more localised provision.

In response, officers reported that a large piece of work was being carried out including an audit to understand what the provision was currently and to check for quality assurance; how many children there were currently and how many were coming in, with a view to commissioning an in-house alternative provision. A further update would be available in November, once the audit had been undertaken.

The Committee noted that the Fair Access Panel held a small budget out of the High Needs Block to enable them to place a child that had not been able to be placed due to Finance.

The Committee thanked Deborah Bell for all the work undertaken thus far, and requested a further update in six months' time.

## 146/19 SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) STRATEGY

(Agenda No. 13)

The Committee had before them a report (ESC13) which set out the draft SEND Strategy. The Strategy had been shared with school colleagues at the Heads & Chairs briefings which were held before the Easter break and the SEND Performance Board, including the Parent Carer Forum and the Oxfordshire Association of Special School Heads.

Further work would be undertaken to develop the strategy on the 21 June 2019, where a provider network event was being held with parents and health colleagues to expand on the strategy further.

The SEND Strategy would become part of the wider Education Strategy which would be shared with colleagues across education, to include Education Scrutiny.

The following points were raised during discussion:

The Committee wished 'at the right time' to be added to the SEND vision statement.

The Committee noted the new post by the Clinical Commissioning Group to improve early intervention, working closely with Health Visitors to enable issues to be picked up before the end of year six and requested that the person who took the new post attend a future meeting of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Committee further noted that problems often arose after the two-year check and that G. P's were a very important part of the process.

The Committee noted that a review of Special Needs Support Services was being undertaken to look at what support was being offered at this time in this area, and requested that it be notified of the outcome of that review.

***The Committee is RECOMMENDED to consider the priorities identified in the document attached and advise whether any changes need to be made.***

## 147/19 FORWARD PLAN AND COMMITTEE BUSINESS

(Agenda No. 14)

Members considered the forward Programme of items and agreed items for the September and November Meetings as shown below (Changes shown in bold italics).

Agenda Item	Reasons and objective for item	Lead Member / Officer
<b>17 June 2019 (previously 19 June)</b>		
Regional Schools Commissioner	A question and answer session with the Regional Schools	Chairman (Cllr Michael Waine)

	Commissioner Chairman	
New Schools Building Programme	To receive an update on the progress of the Programme and discuss emerging issues of delay.	Head of Access to Learning (Allyson Milward) / Cllr Lindsay-Gale
Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Strategy	To receive a report about the implementation of Council's SEND strategy	Head of SEND (Jayne Howarth)
Annual Academies in Oxfordshire Report	An update on academies' status, issues and trends across Oxfordshire	Paper only. From Head of Access to Learning (Allyson Milward)
Post-16 results and EET data	A comprehensive report on post-16 results and destinations in Education Employment and Training	Head of School Improvement & Learning (Kim James)
Update on Northfield School post-Ofsted inspection work and progress	To receive an update on progress at Northfield School following its Ofsted inspection rating of Inadequate	Head of SEND (Jayne Howarth)
Fair Access Protocol	To support the direction of and to receive a report on the implementation of the revised Fair Access Protocol in advance of the next academic year. Recommendation from the Deep Dive on attendance.	Head of Learner Engagement (Deborah Bell)
<b>4 September 2019</b>		
Post-Carillion Update on Schools Repair & Maintenance	A 6-month update following the one made in March 2019 to the Committee on prioritisation and delivery of repair and maintenance in schools following the collapse of Carillion.	Assistant Community Management (George Eleftheriou) Director Facilities (George)
Reintegration Timetabling	To receive a report about the number of reintegration timetables being used at schools across Oxfordshire and any evidence in them being used as an alternative to exclusions. (Recommendation from the Performance Scrutiny Committee).	Head of Learner Engagement (Deborah Bell)



New academic year update on New Schools	To receive an update report on proposed and planned new schools in Oxfordshire.	Head of Access to Learning (Allyson Milward)
Alternative Provision Commissioning Strategy	To receive a brief on the development of the strategy and for Committee Members to have input prior to its implementation in November 2019.	Head of Learner Engagement (Deborah Bell)
<b>To be scheduled</b>		
Home to School Transport Policy	Discussion around forming a working group to input into the formulation of the policy for mainstream schools.	Cllr John Howson
Educational Attainment	Recommendations from the committee working group on improving educational performance	John Howson / Head of School Improvement and Learning (Kim James)
<b><i>Disparity in educational outcomes across Localities and closing the gap (vulnerable learners)</i></b>	<b><i>Profile of educational outcomes across Oxfordshire – sharing learning across the county and forming pathways to raising the attainment of vulnerable pupils (best practice), current provision of support, an overview of the profile of vulnerable learners.</i></b>	<b><i>To be scheduled for September or November Meeting</i></b>
Demographic trends	Planning for school places and supporting families with English as an additional language	
<b><i>Schools funding formula</i></b>	<b><i>Potentially a task group reporting back to ESC</i></b>	<b><i>November Meeting</i></b>
<b><i>Children and Family Centres and Locality Community Support Services</i></b>	<b><i>To present the findings of the monitoring investigations undertaken by members of the Committee following on from the presentation in July 2018.</i></b>	<b><i>Cllr Michael Waine/Area Social Care Manager.  September Meeting if room.</i></b>
Update on the impact of work on reducing exclusions	To present the impact / results of implementing the recommendations on exclusions from the committee working group.	Assistant Director for Education (David Clarke) / Head of Learner Engagement (Deborah Bell)

Learner Engagement Strategy	To present to the committee the new OCC strategy for learner engagement.	Assistant Director for Education (David Clarke) / Head of Learner Engagement (Deborah Bell)
Post 16 Home to School Transport (mainstream)	To discuss how the Committee might add value in looking into the issue of cost of post-16 transport to school.	Chairman

..... in the Chair

Date of signing .....