

Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Education, Skills and Employment
At 5.00 pm on Wednesday 25th August, 2021 via Zoom (virtual meeting)

Present:-

Members

Councillor Scott Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Wendy Brackenbury
Councillor Philip Irwin
Councillor Anne Lee

Councillor Dorothy Maxwell
Councillor Lee Wilkes

Officers

Jenny Daniels
Anne-Marie Dodds
Cathi Hadley
Ben Smith

Democratic Services Officer
Assistant Director for Children
Director of Children's Services
Democratic and Electoral Services Manager

19 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Leanne Buckingham (Cllr Anne Lee substituting) and Annabel de Capell Brooke.

20 Minutes of the meeting held on 4 August 2021.

RESOLVED that:

The minutes of the meeting held on 4 August 2021 be approved as a true and accurate record of the meeting.

21 Members' Declarations of Interest

The Chair invited those who wished to do so to declare interests in respect of items on the agenda.

No declarations were received.

22 Corporate Plan

The Executive Director of Children's Services presented the relevant sections of the draft Corporate Plan to the Executive Advisory Panel for its consideration, in order to ensure the opportunity to provide advice and feedback to the Executive.

It was noted that the Council's inaugural Corporate Plan offered the opportunity for the Council to set out its rationale, purpose and what it wished to achieve in the coming years. This would be a high level document that would be supported by service plans and team plans and was expected to be considered by full Council for approval in December 2021, following external consultation.

Arising from discussion, the following principal suggestions and comments were made:-

Vision, Values and Key Commitments

- That the value relating to better, brighter future should have the words 'regardless of background' added to emphasize that all children were considered;
- It was felt that the tone of key points was realistic;
- In priority 2, bullet point 2, that 'access to a good standard of education' be changed to '...**high** standard of education';

Better, Brighter Futures

- The first of the three titles should be changed to read '... equal access to a **high** standard of education.';
- That the wording around providing first choice placements in schools could be re-written to state 'increase the percentage of children offered their first choice of school';
- In answer to a query from the Panel, it was confirmed that the statement regarding schools providing a good education encompassed all schools;
- It was noted that school place planning would dictate which areas were at most need of assistance;
- It was also noted that 'ensuring every child had a good standard of education' covered every school including special needs schools;
- It was noted that many 16-19 year olds went on to further training but this year especially, it was vital to ensure the support they required was maintained after interruptions to education caused by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Safe and thriving places

- It was noted that there would be some dovetailing between different service areas particularly in relation to the number of people not in education or employment decreasing;
- It was suggested that in the section relating to high-quality jobs and better skills that an additional bullet point be added - 'Sustain a high level of employment';

RESOLVED that:

The Panel present its contributions to the development of the Corporate Plan for consideration.

23 Safeguarding in Schools - Guidance Update

The Assistant Director of Education presented a report providing an overview of the main changes/additions to the statutory guidance for schools on safeguarding and highlighted the actions required to ensure that the Local Authority was properly discharging its duty to advise on safeguarding in education settings.

The following key changes to the document were highlighted:-

- i) The age group had been extended and safeguarding was now key for all providers including those supporting people aged 16-19 years.
- ii) Learning had been undertaken from the periods of remote home learning arising from COVID-19 and guidance was now included in case further periods of remote learning were ever required;
- iii) An emphasis had been placed on the whole school being responsible for safeguarding children, including that of After School Clubs who were attached to a school;
- iv) The guidance had been provided to Heads and Governing Bodies and whilst designed to be minimal in terms of wording it was also designed to provide maximum meaning;
- v) The Panel was pleased to note the updated links between vulnerability and safeguarding, as well as the greater emphasis on information sharing.

RESOLVED that:

- a) The updated Safeguarding Guidance for Schools be noted;
- b) The revisions that support the delivery of Safeguarding recommendations within schools in North Northamptonshire be recognised;
- c) It be noted that the Safeguarding in Education Service will promote and support the introduction of the new guidance to promote Safeguarding in Education.

24 Executive Item - Provision of Annex Site to Isebrook SEND College

The Executive Director presented a report to be considered by the Executive on 26 August 2021 setting out all the necessary information to make a fully informed decision on the proposal to fund an annex site or 'Connected Offer' provision to Isebrook Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) College, Kettering.

It was noted that the Council had a statutory obligation to provide special needs school places and that the proposed annex site would provide 20 new SEND placements. The SEND capital grant was to be used which was considered a cost effective way of providing necessary provision in Kettering.

Arising from discussion the following principal comments were noted:-

- i) It was noted there was a lack of SEND places in the North Northants area, hence the proposals that would be presented to the Executive for its approval;
- ii) Following a query, the Director would come back to the Panel with the exact total cost of out of county placements for SEND but it was on average £75,000 per year;
- iii) The annex site to Isebrook SEND college was owned by North Northants Council;
- iv) The site was a good facility and would be available for community use.

RESOLVED that:

The proposals to fund an annex site or 'Connected Offer' provision to Isebrook SEND College, Kettering be supported.

25 Executive Item - School Improvement Works - Montsaye Academy

The Executive Director presented a report proposing to passport banked Section 106 funding, naming Montsaye Academy as beneficiary, for use on a capital improvement scheme to improve the educational facilities at the school.

Arising from discussion, it was noted that:-

- i) There was a number of good news items such as this which the Council should promote as fully as possible;
- ii) The Section 106 funding had been earmarked to the school and extensive planning had been undertaken to ensure spending in line with this was provided to the school.

RESOLVED that:

The proposals for the improvements to the standard of accommodation at Montsaye Academy be supported.

26 Forward Plan of Executive Items

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager introduced this item, stating the next Forward plan would be published on 1 September 2021.

In answer to a query from the Panel it was confirmed that when details of the Forward Plan were published, this published both on the Council's website and circulated to all members of the Council.

RESOLVED that:-

That the Forward Plan be noted.

27 Forward List of Items for Education, Skills and Employment EAP

The Democratic and Electoral Services Manager introduced this item which provided details of agenda items due to be considered by the Board over the period September – December 2021.

The Executive Director of Children's Services confirmed that a report on high needs funding report would be brought to the Panel in late October 2021.

RESOLVED that:

The Forward List of Items for the Education Skills and Employment Advisory Panel be noted.

28 Close of Meeting

There being no further items for consideration, the Chair thanked members and officers for their attendance and closed the meeting.

Chair

Date

The meeting closed at 6.05 pm