

Minutes of a meeting of the EAP Education, Skills and Employment

At 5.00 pm on Wednesday 4th May, 2022 in the
Held as Remote meeting, via Zoom

Present:-

Members

Councillor Scott Edwards (Chair)
Councillor Jean Addison (substitute for Councillor Philip Irwin)
Councillor Leanne Buckingham
Councillor Philip Irwin
Councillor Lee Wilkes
Councillor Ian Jelley

Officers

Tony Challinor	Assistant Director, Commissioning & Partnerships
Jenny Daniels	Democracy Officer (minutes)
Neil Goddard	Head of SEND
Jo Hutchinson	Head of School Effectiveness
Louise Tyers	Democratic Services Officer

79 Apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Wendy Brackenbury and Leanne Buckingham.

80 Minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2022

RESOLVED that: The minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 2022 were approved as correct record and signed by the Chair.

81 Declarations of Interest

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

Councillor Jean Addison declared an interest as a governor of Pen Green Nursery.

82 Update on SEND Progress

At the Chairman's invitation the Assistant Director for Education presented a report which provided details of the current state of SEND across the local area and highlighted where there was further work to be done. It also provided details of how they were working with the Northamptonshire Parent Carer Forum, the SEND Accountability Board, the local area SEND vision and strategy, SEND data development, quality assurance, workforce development and progress with Education Health and Care Assessments.

In answer to queries on the report the following was confirmed:

- The membership of the Northamptonshire Parent Carer Forum could be forwarded to members following the meeting.
- The data dashboard would look at different types of needs and which of these could be declining. For example they were identifying fewer children of primary age with ADHD in North Northants.
- They had recently completed recruiting staff. They had a number of requests for assessments. Many schools were declining children meaning the Education Health and Care Assessments (EHCP) had not been completed.
- Support was never withheld for a child and decisions were not based on finance. They did however, have problems in securing an adequate number of spaces.
- Schools did not always have the appropriately trained staff to take particular children and there was a need to ensure there were sufficiently trained staff to meet future needs.
- There was never 1 single reason as to why children were not placed. They looked for solutions across the entire system so there could be a combination with all partners working together to meet a child's needs.
- They were working with partners in the healthcare system to meet speech and language needs as there appeared to be a significant demand in that area.
- They had adequately covered vacancies in Educational Psychologists with Associates so they were now over-staffed in that area.

It was agreed that further progress would be noted in 6-7 months' time.

RESOLVED that: The Executive Advisory Panel for Education, Skills and Employment noted the update on SEND Progress and would receive a further update in November 2022.

83 Schools White Paper - Briefing

At the Chairman's invitation the Head of School Effectiveness introduced a briefing paper on the Schools Government White Paper which set the government's view of education until 2030. It was noted that it would be underpinned by more legislation and it was highly likely that the Department for Education would consult on a range of issues. It did refer to the affects of COVID over the last 2 years and it referred to levying up to SEND papers. There were several chapters highlighting Excellent Teaching and having an excellent teacher for every child, attendance and behaviour, how to reach every SEND child and a having a stronger and fairer system. It also covered what all this would mean for local authorities who had a crucial role to play from ensuring all children had a school place to improving outcomes.

In answer to a query on the briefing it was confirmed that because the local authority wished to work closely with schools in its area they could identify issues in the schools and share best practice so that all children could make good progress.

Members of the Advisory Panel also noted the following:

- Class sizes presented an issue. In small schools teachers had more time to devote to each child but they perhaps lacked support because they were small. Larger schools had bigger classes but also could employ Teaching Assistants in the classroom to assist teachers.
- Schools need to be encouraged to stop selecting children.
- It was felt that unless the paper was backed up by finance and investment in schools it would not succeed.

RESOLVED that: The Executive Advisory Panel for Education Skills and Employment noted the briefing on the Schools White Paper.

84 Family Hubs - Briefing

At the Chairman's invitation the Assistant Director, Commissioning and Partnerships provided a briefing on Family Hubs highlighting the following:

- This was a successor to the Sure Start Programme.
- On 2 April North Northamptonshire was 1 of 75 councils pre-selected as eligible for a Family Hubs programme. This would include a share of £302 million to create new family hubs.
- Family hubs should be tailored for the local area.
- The national vision was set out by the Government. Parents and carers should be central to it so there was a need to develop getting their voices heard. Different agencies worked with parents and the the challenge was in gaining consistency in how they worked with parents.
- The next spending review would have additional money for this if they could demonstrate what they had been doing and how it helped people.
- The Transformation Bid included a steering group and other child minders and service providers may wish to be involved in this.
- There was a need to understand what the issues were and how to address them.
- A key part of the work was to gain member approval to develop a model for North Northants.
- There was a need to identify where hubs would be in North Northants.

In answer to queries on the briefing the following was confirmed:

- It was still to be decided but he would expect all nurseries both private and state should be involved.
- It would be a family hub but they could be encouraging specialist services where they were lacking. Funding would be used to promote improved ways of working.
- To be able to demonstrate success in Transformation 1 and 2 funding there was the need to ensure the ways of address issues involved all partners. There was money available for recruitment and it would pay for someone to get out to settings and gain an understanding of what families required of a family hub. They would ensure all the hubs were aligned. A community led response to addressing needs was required.
- There was a need to ensure the authority learned and took heed from the issues created by the COVID Pandemic. Some services could be accessed virtually and the local offer for SEND had been a virtual one.
- There would be volunteering opportunities.
- Whatever communities stated was the best way to address issues in their area would be offered. So for example if they stated offering more food banks would be the best way to address an issue then they would look to provide more food banks.
- There was a need to demonstrate success of the project so that it could continue. It was about leveraging existing services and aligning them up.

RESOLVED that: The Executive Advisory Panel for Education, Skills and Employment noted the Family Hubs Briefing.

85 Forward Plan of Executive Items

Consideration was given to the Forward List of Items for the Panel.

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

RESOLVED that: The following be added to the forward list of items for presentation at future meetings by officers:

- a) A further update on SEND progress in November 2022;
- b) A further update on Family Hubs for the next meeting; and
- c) A report on children not in education in North Northamptonshire.

87 Close of Meeting

There being no further business the meeting closed at 6.20pm.

Chair

Date