

Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 21 November 2019

Present: Councillor R Caserta (in the Chair)
Councillors T Cummings, J Harris, N Jones, M Powell,
L Smith, S Smith, R Walker and C Walsh

Also in attendance:

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor K Leach, Councillor B Mortenson and
Councillor Susan Southworth

OSC.242 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Harris declared a personal interest in any item relating to Six Town Housing as she is a member of the Board.

Councillor Harris also declared a personal interest in any item relating to The Elton High School as she had previously been a Governor at the school for many years.

Councillor Walsh declared a personal interest in any item relating to Holy Cross College as she is an employee of the college.

Councillor Stella Smith declared a personal interest in any item relating to Holy Cross College as she is a Governor

Mr Mackay, Co-opted Member declared a personal interest in any item relating to The Elton High School as he is a Governor at the School.

OSC.243 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no member of the public present to ask questions under this item.

OSC.244 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

MATTERS ARISING It was agreed:

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 12 September be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

OSC.245 MATTERS ARISING

- Councillor Harris referred to Minute OSC.159, Business Growth and Development and the question that she had asked about Chamberhall. Councillor Harris stated that she had been promised an update at a future meeting and asked that this wasn't forgotten.
- Councillor Walker referred to the question he had asked in relation to Capital Receipts. He had been advised that the information would be provided but he hadn't received any information as yet.

It was explained that this information would be provided as part of the Financial Monitoring Report.

OSC.246 PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS

Councillor Tamoor Tariq, Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Julien Kramer, Interim Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion presented a report giving the Overview and Scrutiny Committee an update on the work being undertaken in relation to School Improvement.

Councillor Tariq explained the journey around school improvement since the implementation of the work in July 2019. There had been a number of meetings held with Head Teachers, Governors, Teachers JCC and the Overview and Scrutiny main Committee and Performance in Schools Working Group.

Councillor Tariq reported that the Regional HMI was due to attend a meeting with Head Teachers in January.

The Regional School's Commissioner had approved the work that had been carried out so far and the plan to move it forward.

Julien Introduced David Frost, Principal – Holy Cross College, Carol McLachlan, Chief Executive – Vision Multi Academy Trust, Rachel O'Neil, Acting Head Teacher – Hoyle Nursery School and Jonathan Wilton, Head Teacher – The Elton High School.

Each of the Head Teachers had submitted a pen portrait of their school or college to the Committee and were given the opportunity to present this information.

Holy Cross

David Frost, Principal at Holy Cross College explained that he had been at the College for 12 years and from 2007 to 2017 had been Ofsted Outstanding with a high number of students (over 50%) attaining A*, A or B at A Level and a large number (85% plus) progressing to university.

In early 2017 Mr Frost reported to Bury Heads that there was a changing emphasis in Ofsted's approach 'Good was the new Outstanding' with a stronger emphasis on Value Added. This places greater weight on the progress of students. Some schools had high percentages of students gaining good GCSEs but low progress scores – getting as good as expected GCSE scores, but not 'better' than expected.

Mr Frost explained that at that time, Holy Cross had received 'Satisfactory' progress measures and were later judged by Ofsted as requiring improvement stating that satisfactory progress was no longer deemed sufficient. The college set in place a strategy not only to maintain high grades and high university success but to work towards 'Very Good' progress as well. It was explained that this was rapidly achieved.

A very strong 'Good' was awarded in inspection in 2018 as a result of the rapid improvement in progress, added to the continuing success such as A Level high grades, progression to university, pastoral care and enrichment. Mr Frost reported that the 2019 results have maintained the 'Very Good' level of progress while doubling Oxbridge admissions and increasing A* grades.

The significant level of improvement was achieved and maintained by strong quality improvement planning focussing on the following 6 elements:-

- Strong monitoring of progress/value added scores at a teacher, class and subject level: every teacher trained to monitor the progress score for every key assessment and exam; (not just senior and middle management) Governors also trained.
- Relentless focus on improving Teaching, Learning and Assessment through observations and investment in CPD.
- Good use of collaboration with other institutions to share excellent practice.
- Strong performance management based on teaching standards.
- Ensuring teaching time was maximised, reducing intrusions into teaching
- High visibility, drive and constant insistence on high standards across college.

This was achieved by focussing on progress and the staples of teaching and learning and a willingness to learn from and work with others to improve.

The Elton High School

Jonathan Wilton, Head Teacher at The Elton High School explained that he had been Head Teacher at the school for the past 4 years and a teacher there for 9.

The school had required improvement at the time that Mr Wilton became Head. The first year as head the school received a good Ofsted report. This was done by revitalising quality assurance, building on strengths and sharing good practice.

Daily delivery -

Relentless focus on standards of Teaching and Learning with weekly briefings for all staff, Staff Teaching and Learning Group, Student Teaching and Learning Group, Improved Quality Assurance process, focus on oracy across the school. All good practice had been reinforced with recent curriculum review across all departments.

Consistent promotion of positive values – wide range of student roles – peer mentors, peer readers, sports captains, maths mentors etc. A fortnightly newsletter to the wider school community, the introduction of a new school uniform, strong rewards system, attendance rewards and weekly attendance focus/intervention.

Strong profile of staff and daily presence – Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) on lesson by lesson walkaround, open door policy across the school, staff presence at lesson changeover, SLT on daily morning/afternoon duty. Staff turnover is very low.

Strong focus on staff well-being and reinforcing team morale – Golden weeks half termly (no meetings after school), wellbeing drop-ins, increased number of SLE

roles for strong staff and a full restructure of TLR holders to ensure consistency and fairness of roles.

Mr Wilton explained the challenges and opportunities; Quality of education; Behaviour and Attendance; Leadership and Management; Personal Development, and the work that being done in these areas.

Vision Multi Academy Trust

Carol McLachlan, Chief Executive Officer – Vision Multi Academy Trust explained that she had been a head teacher for over twenty years and had also worked in school improvement.

Vision Multi Academy Trust had opened in 2014 with 3 Bury Schools:- East Ward Primary School, Higher Lane Primary School and Sunny Bank Primary School with a total of 1120 children.

The role of the trust was explained as “Vision Multi Academy Trust is a community of school in which our pupils come first; we are proud of each and every one of them and want them to thrive, flourish and achieve their full potential within a supportive and caring environment.

The schools in our trust have come together to recruit, retain and develop the highest quality staff in order to deliver the best educational outcomes and be the employer of choice.”

The Vision MAT was a national leader of education providing services to other schools including: School improvement offer, professional peer support and challenge, office services, compliance management and leadership as well as other services.

It was reported that at the end of KS2 72% of children across the trust achieve the expected or above in reading, writing and mathematics. At the end of KS1 69% of children across the trust achieve expected or above in reading, writing and mathematics.

Year one phonics – 87% of children or above across the trust pass the phonics test. 70% of children across the trust achieve a good level of development at the end of the early year’s foundation stage.

Ms McLachlan explained that there was consistency across the schools in the Trust with a good, strong team and an excellent support network.

Governance across the schools was high with Member and Trustees supporting and challenging the schools. Each school has its own local governing body who focus on school improvement. The school improvement members provide external reviews. All local Governing bodies and board complete a skills audit to ensure that they are highly skilled and carry out ongoing training and support.

It was explained that the trust would continue to provide support to other schools and continue the relationship with the Local Authority. There were no plans to grow as a trust at the moment and would only do so for the right reasons.

Hoyle Nursery School

Rachel O'Neil Acting Head Teacher at Hole Nursery School explained that she had been the Acting Head since January 2019.

Rachel explained that Hoyle Nursery School was located in one of the most deprived areas of Bury and provided support to the parents as well as the children. This was especially important with children who have English as a second language. There were 16 different languages spoken within the school at the current time.

The school developed and created bespoke packages for all of the children after establishing what support each child required and ensured that the SEND policy was embedded and practiced as an operational part of the whole school.

The information provided set out the summary of school improvement that was being undertaken across SEND, Curriculum, C & L, PSED, Reading and Maths.

Rachel reported that the Nursery School had been recognised as Outstanding by Ofsted.

Those present were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions and the following points were raised:

- Councillor Harris congratulated those present on the hard work and achievements that they had made.
- Councillor Caserta referred to the ongoing work at The Elton High School and stated that the work that had been undertaken was very encouraging and it seemed that having strong foundations in place was working.

Mr Wilton explained that strong teachers supporting strong teachers on a lesson by lesson basis was a good quality experience.

- Councillor Walsh referred to the quality assurance process at The Elton High School and if the process had been made more robust and whether there were more staff ownership involved.

Mr Wilton explained that it was a mixture of both. The deep dives into the different subjects were thorough but supported. Feedback was always asked for on how the exercises were carried out and changes would be made if required. The whole Quality Assurance process had become part of the school and had modernised the evaluation process.

- Councillor Lucy Smith asked whether there was enough robust collaboration across Bury schools?

Ms McLachlan explained that the schools partnership programme had initially had 3 schools working in partnership, this had proved successful and had been rolled out to 14 more primary schools. The programme was partially funded by the education endowment fund. The programme undertook visits to schools to work with them and was structured, purposeful and focussed.

Julien explained that there were lots of different ways of working together and that sharing good practice was an excellent place to start. The role of the Local Authority was to broker good partnerships and allow the relationships and partnerships to grow.

It was agreed:

1. That David Frost, Jonathan Wilton, Carol McLachlan and Rachel O'Neil be thanked for their attendance.
2. That the work be undertaken in relation to school improvement be endorsed.

OSC.247 OMBUDSMAN ANNUAL REPORT

Jayne Hammond, Assistant Director – Legal and Democratic Services presented a report setting out findings and recommendations of the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

The Council receives an Annual Report summarising all complaints dealt with by the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman.

Of the complaints received, 27 were referred back for local resolution, 20 were closed after initial enquires, 10 were not upheld and 5 were upheld. The highest number of complaints were for Education and children's services at 17, 11 for Adult care services and 11 for Benefits and Tax.

Those present were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions and the following points were raised:

- Councillor N Jones referred to the rise in the number of complaints received by the Ombudsman and asked what the reason was for this.

It was explained that figures could increase or decrease from year to year depending on a number of circumstances.

- Councillor Jones asked what the cost was to the Council in relation to the complaints.

It was explained that 3 complaints had required a financial settlement which would normally be a nominal fee.

- Councillor Powell asked how Bury compared to other Greater Manchester Authorities.

It was explained that this information was available through the Ombudsman website.

- Councillor Caserta asked how many complaints were submitted to officers and why had the numbers of Ombudsman complaints increased.

Jayne Hammond explained that she did not have a breakdown of complaints received by each Directorate but that each Directorate would be able to bring insight into their own departmental complaints.

It was agreed:

That the contents of the report be noted and that the Assistant Director for Legal and Democratic Services be thanked for her attendance.

OSC.248 CORPORATE FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2019

Councillor O'Brien presented the Corporate Financial Monitoring Report to the Committee.

Following questions raised in relation to Link Asset Management, Capital Receipts and Council owned investment properties, Mike Woodhead, Chief Finance Officer gave an update:

Link Asset Management received £14,500 per annum for its services.

Capital receipts received:

- 2017/2018 - £2.3m – 43 mostly small pockets of land. Highest value £1.3m Dale Street.
- 2018/2019 - £1.2m – Highest value £0.5m – 3 Bridgefield Mews.
- 2019/2020 - £0.8m – Highest Value - £0.6m – Land at Fountain Place.

Investment properties:

- Café Istanbul
- 43 – 45 Lever Street Manchester – 2016 purchase –£2.5m income yrs 1 to 3 - £71,000, £165,000 and £104,000
- Northern House, Huddersfield – Purchase £2.4m. Income £130,000pa
- Q Park, Bury - Purchase £2.3m. Income £94,000-£129,000pa
- St Anne's commercial building Purchased 2015 income £60,000pa until 2018 when became vacant. Currently incurring utilities and insurance costs of £12,000pa.

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien the Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing and Mike Woodhead, Chief Finance Officer presented the Corporate Financial Monitoring Report, April to September 2019.

The report informed Members of the Council's financial position for the period April 2019 – September 2019 and projects the estimated outturn at the end of 2019/2020.

Those present were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and the following points were raised:

- Councillor N Jones asked whether the Council were planning on selling off Castle Leisure Centre or Ramsbottom Leisure Centre.

Councillor O'Brien explained that there was a review about to be undertaken in relation to the leisure centres and until that was completed no decisions would be made. There were currently no plans for closure. The day to day running of the facilities and how much investment was required was currently being considered for the review.

Councillor O'Brien stated that once the review had been completed a report would be brought to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- Councillor N Jones asked what the timescale of the review was.

Councillor O'Brien stated that any financial targets would relate to the next financial year and not the current one.

- Councillor Walker asked at what point the Councillors would be involved.

It was explained that work needs to be carried out to put the review together and then consultation would commence.

- Councillor Harris referred to the use of reserves and asked whether this would be the case for this financial year.

Mike Woodhead explained that he hoped that there would be contributions made to the reserves for the financial year.

- Councillor Caserta referred to non-service specific and how the figures were calculated.

Mike Woodhead explained that the previous years' figures would be used as a baseline figure.

- Councillor Caserta stated that the pupil premium of £450,000 - £500,000 used to be allocated directly to schools but was now allocated to the Local Authority. £145,000 of this had not been spent so had been put into the LAC fund. Councillor Caserta stated that this was unfair as it should be used within schools for LAC.

Mike Woodhead stated that he would ask for the information in relation to this issue and report back to the Committee.

- Councillor Caserta referred to the Radcliffe Regeneration scheme and asked what the budget was for the scheme and who signed off on the different aspects of it.

Councillor O'Brien stated that the figures were set out in the budget in February 2019. The Director of Economic Regeneration and Capital Growth was the Director with responsibility in this area.

- Councillor N Jones referred to houses being built on brownfield sites and asked how many had been built to date.

Councillor O'Brien explained that work was currently being carried out in relation to the sites. He would report back to the Committee at its January meeting.

It was agreed:

That the contents of the report be noted.

OSC.249 DEVOLUTION/GM COMBINED AUTHORITY

Jayne Hammond presented a report from the Leader of the Council highlighting the most recent updates in relation to the work with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership, both of which Bury has active involvement with.

The report updated on The Greater Manchester Strategy, Health and Social Care, Greater Manchester Plan for Homes, Jobs and the Environment, Adult Education and other activity.

It was agreed:

1. That the contents of the report be noted
2. That the overview and Scrutiny Committee continue to receive reports giving them an update of the work being carried out.

OSC.250 *CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE COMPLAINTS REPORT - FOR INFORMATION*

It was agreed:

That the contents of the report be noted.

OSC.251 JANUARY MEETING - CHANGE OF DATE

It was explained that the scheduled meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was scheduled to meet on 23 January 2019. The date of this meeting clashed with the Holocaust Memorial Service. Members were therefore asked if they would agree to a change of date to avoid a clash.

It was agreed:

That the January 2020 meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would take place on Thursday 30 January 2020 at 7pm.

OSC.252 NOTIFICATION OF A CALL IN

Councillor Caserta reported that as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee he had Called-in the following Cabinet Decision:

To approve the use of the community asset transfer arrangements to change the control of Children's Centres.

The reason for the Call-on set out on the Call-in notice was:

To understand the financial implications & social hardship that will be caused by transferring centres to private ownership.

It was agreed:

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee would meet to consider the Call-in on Thursday 19 December 2019 at 6pm.

COUNCILLOR R CASERTA
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.30 pm)