

**Minutes of: CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Date of Meeting:** 4 November 2021

**Present:** Councillor S Wright (in the Chair)  
Councillors C Boles, J Lancaster, L McBriar, T Pilkington,  
D Quinn, G Staples-Jones, K Thomas and M Whitby

**Also in attendance:** Councillor Tamoor Tariq, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills  
Councillor Bernstein, Shadow Cabinet Member Corporate Affairs, Transformation and HR  
Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills  
Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director (Early Help and School Readiness)  
Paul Cooke, Assistant Director of Learning  
Wendy Jackson, Service Lead for Quality Assurance and Performance

**Public Attendance:** Two members of the public were present at the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor S Butler and Councillor P Cropper

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## 1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Boles declared a personal interest as he was employed by a Bolton school which also has a site in Bury.

Councillor Staple Jones declared a personal interest as a Governor of Bury Church High School.

Councillor Wright declared a personal interest as his wife is employed at a school in Bury and Grandchildren in a school in Bury.

Councillor Pilkington declared a personal interest as a parent of a child with special educational needs who attends a school in Bury.

Councillor J Lancaster declared a personal interest as she has Children who attend school in Bury.

Councillor M Whitby declared an interest regarding item 5 as one of the Children's Hubs is based in her ward.

## 2 PUBLIC QUESTIONS TIME

A period of 30 minutes has been set aside for members of the public to ask questions on matters considered at the last meeting and set out in the minutes or on the agenda for tonight's meeting.

Questions and responses, received in advance of the meeting are attached.

**Minutes:**

The following questions from members of the public were received in advance of the meeting:

**Question one:** My question refers to the SEND HAF funding; please can the Cabinet member confirm - how much scrutiny has been given to the SEND HAF Funding including the number of children in attendance, those that had multiple spaces and what efforts were made to include children with SEND that parents/carers weren't members of Bury2gether? **Emmajane Michael-Okocha**

In response Councillor Tamoor Tariq, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills reported that HAF was new to Bury this year; we worked with the VCFA to encourage local organisations operating in local communities to provide provision for as many as our FSM children as possible, and for as many of them to be as inclusive as possible. This was advertised through Bury Council and the VCFA.

We provided a number of provisions with additional funding for a SENCO to ensure they were able to open their provision to as many SEND Children as possible. Local Organisations (including Bury2Gether) completed a grant application form which was scrutinised by members of the HAF Steering Group, which included the VCFA and the Children's Services Commissioning Team to ensure scrutiny.

In order to advertise all available provision to eligible children, we developed a leaflet of all activities which was sent to all parents of FSM children (using the current list of children eligible for FSM)

Data in respect of all HAF activity has been submitted to the Department for Education.

**Supplementary Question:** I am asking specifically regarding the SEND HAF funding, a lot of the activities in the leaflets would not accept children with SEND, therefore I am asking specifically in relation to the funding given to Bury2gether for SEND children.

In response to the supplementary question Sandra Bruce advised the HAF funding was specific to children eligible for free school meals. All children who were eligible for free school meals whether they had additional needs or not were contacted, and enough spaces were available. We requested from the Department for

Education if we could allocate some of the funding that was available to other children who may not be eligible for HAF activities. Then we put out a different form for other children in different communities to apply this included SEN children. Bury2gether made an application and requested some of that money. FSM children were prioritised in the activities and we had around 23,000 places for children over the summer holidays.

**Question 2:** When the child's voice is supposed to be central to their care and support why does the CWDT think it is necessary to remove an early help worker because of process, ignoring the children's wishes. Why does the continuum of care for a child with disabilities not favour consistency? **Kiera Delaney**

In response Councillor Tamoor Tariq, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills reported that he is in complete agreement that consistency for children, young people and their families is very important. We do not remove Early help workers from cases, but on occasion EH workers demonstrate that their work has identified unmet need and it may appear that a child or young people meet the threshold for CWD involvement. When this occurs the decision as to whether we support by consulting with the family and EH worker or whether we supersede the Early Help worker to enable the family to benefit from our support is made in discussion with the family themselves. We have examples of families we are supporting who wish to remain with the EH worker and families who have requested an assessment from CWD.

**Supplementary Question:** At no point in the assessment process my family or my child's wishes and feelings were taken into consideration. This was detrimental as at the point of losing our early help worker we were in crisis. We then had to go over our whole situation again which led to support systems getting things wrong as they don't understand the full picture. I ask, are the child's wishes and feelings considered going forward and what do the Council do to ensure situations like this don't happen in the future.

In response Councillor Tariq, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills reported that he is sorry for the experience Ms Delaney and her family have had. Cllr Tariq made a commitment that as Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills he will look into some of the specifics of this

case to ensure that experience is not repeated. He thanked Ms Delaney for bringing this matter to the Committee and being so brave to share her story. Councillor Tariq stated he will look to ensure family's in the same circumstance as M Delaney do not go through this same experience.

Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director (Early Help and School Readiness) stated she is unhappy to hear this experience has happened as the purpose of her role is to support families. Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director requested to catch up with Ms Delaney outside of this forum to ensure this does not happen again.

**The next three members of the public were unable to attend so the Chair, Councillor Wright choose to read out the questions to the Committee.**

**Question 3:** My question is in the report about school place projections are there none for SEN specialist school places needed? **Deb Hirst**

In response Councillor Tamoor Tariq, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills reported that the paper presented to the Scrutiny Committee on pupil place planning responds to the statutory duty on the Council in respect of mainstream school places, and the important role of the Council in managing the sufficiency of high-quality school places and taking appropriate action to ensure sustainability where the demand for places is in decline.

The provision of specialist school places is subject to different statutory duties, and the demand for places, and the manner in which the Council ensures the sufficiency of places differs to the arrangements for mainstream places.

Through the work that the Council is doing in respect of Project Safety Valve, which was the subject of a report to Scrutiny at its last meeting, plans are being developed to increase capacity of specialist provision.

Further details about this will be provided when an update on SEND is provided to Scrutiny at a future meeting.

**Question 4:** Was the HAF funding for SEND children provided through Bury2gether effectively spent considering the cost of the activities, how many places were available, how many individual children accessed these places, how

many children accessed multiple places, were all children eligible for free school meals and how was this eligibility checked? **Dawn Airey**

In response Councillor Tamoor Tariq, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills reported that prior to the summer holidays, the DFE confirmed that we were able to use some of the HAF Funding to support children with additional needs, rather than those eligible for FSMs.

Bury2Gether made an application which reflected the HAF eligibility of an activity and food.

Due to data protection, we do not have the names of individual children who attended all HAF Sessions, but now that HAF Funding has been confirmed for future years, the Council are looking at a centralised booking and reporting system which will provide this level of detail.

**Question 5** What is Bury Council's eligibility criteria for a disabled child to have a child in need assessment carried out? Where is this eligibility criteria document published? (so as to be publicly available to councillors and public alike).

**Catherine Black**

In response Councillor Tamoor Tariq, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills reported that the document explaining access to support on the Children With Disabilities team can be found on the council website. The link is: <https://www.bury.gov.uk/index.aspx?articleid=11365>. The accessibility of this document, where it is found and how the contents are presented are matters being considered within the scope of several working groups. I can confirm that members from Bury2gether attend these forums to ensure that such documents are co-produced. The eligibility criteria will be reviewed in co-production with Bury2gether.

As there was time left from the 30 minutes set aside for Public Question's the Chair opened up to members of the public present.

**Question 6:** How many parent/carer assessments have been done in the past two years and what the eligibility for those assessments is? **Kiera Delaney.**

Isobel Booler Director of Education and Skills advised parent/carer assessment is something we need to look at. We do have work on this at the moment which is in co-production with Bury2gether as our partner. Isobel Booler offered to have a discussion outside the meeting regarding this matter.

**Question 7:** How many EHCP haven't been reviewed when they were supposed to be reviewed and how many EHCP's have needed to be reviewed straight away as soon as they have been finalised as they have been finalised incorrectly.

**Emmajane Michael-Okocha**

Isobel Booler, Director of Education and Skills advised we hold around 2000 EHCP's and we have a statutory duty to annually review. Colleagues are aware from the last Scrutiny Committee that we have challenges around SEND. We are currently recruiting to the Education Health and Care Plan Team and have a new manager that starts next week and have just employed four new case workers. Last year assessments completed within the 20-week statutory window only reached 27% so this year a lot of work has taken place to close the gap; this year we are around 53% on the 20-week statutory window. In comparison nationally it is around 58% and so this is a national issue also.

### **3 MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

Two member questions have been received in advance of the meeting. Copies of the questions were circulated to Members of the committee in advance of the meeting.

**Question 1:** Why does Cllr Tariq think that the Let's Do It strategy has been found to have minimal awareness across the Children's Services directorate?

**Councillor Nick Jones asked by Councillor Bernstein.**

Councillor Tariq, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Children, Young people and Skills reported that the Let's do it! Strategy includes a commitment to hear and engage with all voices in the community, including young people. Children and Young People are at the heart of the strategy including early help within the "Local" principle; education and skills within "Enterprise"; engagement and co-design with young people in "Together" and inclusion within "Strengths".

The LGA peer review recognised the ambition in Bury for children and young people in Bury but fed back that there was work to do to embed the new approach within children's social care practice. Co-production with young people is currently too limited, for example and the current "Compliance" culture in children's social work does not support the flexible and engaging spirit of Let's do it!

A commitment has therefore been made to developing the "Let's" model within the Children and Young People's department, which will be reflected in the improvement plan which has been branded as "Let's do it it ... for children". This will include the further strengthening of Early Help; evaluation and development of the Signs of Safety model (a strengths-based approach to social care); a review of the co-production approach and new tools to align practice with the "Let's" strategic approach such as appreciative enquiry.

In parallel, a broader piece of organisation development work is being planned to similarly reinforce new behaviours amongst all other staff and ensure complementary support across other departments.

**Supplementary question:** Would you give us the reassurance that included in the action plan will be milestones to identify those improvements have been achieved?

Councillor Tariq, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills reported that he can give that commitment; the whole point of the improvement plan is to ensure the actions set are being implemented. The Improvement Board is being Chaired by Linda Clegg and will ensure we achieve the milestones set.

Question 2: What plans and by what date are being put in place to assist Members to strengthen their corporate parenting responsibilities? **Councillor Russell Bernstein**

Councillor Tariq, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member for Children, Young people and Skills reported We have an active Corporate Parenting Board we will be holding a Corporate Parenting week from the 15<sup>th</sup> to the 19<sup>th</sup> November and elected

members are invited to this. During this period sessions and events will be held every day which the members will be invited to get involved with.

The Members briefing training has been updated and the link sent to all to complete. Following this we increased the number of corporate parenting champions. We have invited the members of the Corporate Parenting Board to be members of the constituted group for Care Experienced young people and the Virtual School Governing Board. This has increased participation and involvement. Also elected members got involved with supporting the Summer activity programme.

The Corporate Parenting Newsletter will also be sent out this week which will provide an overview of work in the last few months.

We will continue to drive this important work forward – we need to get the whole of the council on board with the responsibility towards children in care and care leavers. We certainly have a lot to do and to celebrate.

## **4 MINUTES**

### **It was agreed:**

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 07<sup>th</sup> September 2021 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair subject to the following amendments:

Councillor Whitby raised that a question had been asked by another Committee member about the diversity of Parental Consultations and what consultations were taken outside of Bury2gether. Councillor Pilkington raised the question: What help was available for parents who are not members of Bury2gether.

The response to Cllr Pilkington's questions was that for Bury2gether to have a reach of over 1000 is an incredibly successful parent model. One of the important aspects is where you get support, we have an Independent Advisory Service commissioned from Barnardo's; the local offer on the Bury Directory communicates this to parents. We have a working group including our parents; however, the governance of the local offer needs to improve to reach more parents.

Councillor Lancaster requested that the difference in costs for maintained and non-maintained Schools be noted due to being a significant difference between maintained and non-maintained.

Councillor Lancaster requested the number of children (140) and the cost comparison (approximately £25,000 per child) to attend a maintained school is noted.

Councillor Lancaster requested the noting of the question: Who attended in the Fit and Fed Scheme in the May half term and what the figures were like across the Borough.

## **5 MATTERS ARISING**

Councillor Luis McBriar requested an update on the independent review on Speech and Language.

Isobel Booler, Director of Education and Skills advised that a colleague from the CCG has been looking for people to complete this. It has not started yet but it is due to be underway in the next few weeks. Funding and commissioning has been agreed and work will commence shortly.

Councillor Tom Pilkington advised that members of the Scrutiny Committee were invited to meet with Bury2gether earlier this week and asked some direct questions of them. This included asking who scrutinises them, he reported that they gave a comprehensive answer in that they are scrutinised not only by this Committee but by the Department for Education and the Charity contact also. He believes this will be a point of public interest especially regarding the public questions received.

## **6 MEETING THEME - LGA PEER REVIEW FEEDBACK AND RESPONSE**

Councillor Tariq, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills wished to use this opportunity to make members aware, if they were not already that there has been a change in the leadership of the Department. This has meant there is additional pressures with the current senior leadership team within Children Service's. He added that Paul Cooke, Sandra Bruce and Isobel Booler have all been acting up in their respective areas and in most cases covering two roles. Councillor Tariq requested that members of the Committee consider this with the workload and pressures of this Department at this stage. It is hoped that this interim arrangement will soon be over, and a briefing can be provided at the next meeting providing information on the senior leadership team. Councillor Tariq thanked the officers for stepping up at such a critical point.

Moving on to the meeting theme; LGA Peer Review Councillor Tariq reported that the review was conducted virtually.

It covered:

- The effectiveness and recruitment of social workers

- The impact of quality assurance
- Quality placements for Looked after Children and care leavers
- Looking at the effectiveness of Child Protection Plans
- Capacity for transformation across the department

Isobel Booter, Director for Education and Skills reported that a Delivery Board and Plan has been set up and met in September 2021. However, the last three weeks we have been under inspection by Ofsted and therefore the plan has changed due to this and leadership changes.

A key area we are aware of is the recruitment and retention of social workers and is at the heart of the recruitment plan. As well as responding to the LGA Peer Review we will respond to the Ofsted findings. The findings from Ofsted will be provided on the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

Councillor McBriar requested a breakdown of what cases are and aren't dealt with in one day and if high caseloads result in children remaining in harmful situations for longer what is being done to solve the situation as per page 14 point 2.6 in the agenda pack.

In response Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director for Early Help and School readiness advised that for the cases dealt with in one day the figure is 96%. Whilst there has been a slight drop recently this is due to bringing MASH back together but as a usual figure, we are in the high 90's. We have measurements on how long it takes to do assessments and whether they are in timeframe, whether visits and planning is also done in set timeframes. We are in line with our statutory neighbours and nationally, therefore despite setbacks the service has had it has not impacted performance. However, Sandra Bruce advised that with maintaining statutory figures you can lose some of the quality, which is demonstrable from the public questions submitted.

Councillor McBriar also requested further information on document pack page 14 point 2.9; he acknowledged that Bury Council carrying out all 'expected' activity is positive, however, he questioned what is being done further to this.

In response Isobel Booter, Executive Director of Education and Skills advised a new quality assurance framework is in place and the audits have happened. One area for more work is to look what we can learn from previous cases to drive change going forward.

Councillor McBriar further questioned document pack page 16 point 2.13 and asked what timeline is in place for when the findings are going to be completed.

In response Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills advised that because of challenges around recruitment this week a managed service is being brought in bring in experienced social workers to work with children in need to impact and improve casework. This is for a total of six months and therefore next steps are already being considered and therefore a robust recruitment plan will be used to support the service going forward.

Councillor Whitby asked if the change to the Children's hub's is now embedded and if it is successful.

Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director (Early Help and School Readiness) advised 60% of our schools are working along the task model. It was launched in 2019 but this was right before lockdown, so we have only been able to re-engage in September 2021. We are tracking data but in early days, we are seeing a reduction in referrals in Schools and in turn this is reducing the demand into social care. We ask schools regularly for feedback and this has been predominantly positive.

Councillor Whitby also questioned; due to the pandemic the number of child protection and safeguarding issues throughout the Borough has increased, since services have begun to open up again.

Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director (Early Help and School Readiness) informed the Committee that Bury is usually very low with our figures however what we saw pre-pandemic is our figures increasing. We viewed this positively as we were identifying those children at higher risk. Through the pandemic they remained consistent and are now inline with our statistical neighbours and we are now reaching the children we should.

Councillor J Lancaster asked if the follow up Peer Review has been booked in for the recommended six month period.

In response Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills reported that due to the Ofsted review taking place recently it feels timely to use the findings from the review to drive forward improvements as opposed to the findings from the LGA Peer Review. The Lead for the LGA Peer Review is the Chair for the Delivery Board and will see both findings.

Councillor J Lancaster, the review does not mention SEND within its themes.

In response Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills advised that a review usually focuses on one area, and this was on the 'front door' of services. In the future it would be helpful to have an LGA Peer Review on SEND but once work has taken place.

Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director (Early Help and School Readiness) clarified the SEND framework for inspection is different to the social work frame for inspection. This framework was a social work framework.

Councillor J Lancaster how is the access to safe, good quality housing going to be accommodated considering the housing crisis in Bury.

In response Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills advised the Committee that following a survey completed by care leavers on housing findings proved positive in the housing they were in. Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director (Early Help and School Readiness) added that whilst the Peer Review identified that care leavers did not feel safe in their homes it is due to not having choice of area sometimes; the quality of accommodation is rated highly within the review. We are involved in a national project for care leavers which looks at accommodation along with the HEN project which is led by Greater Manchester.

Councillor Lancaster asked a question in relation to the recruitment and retention of staff; how we are compared to other Councils, how are we going to attract staff and how we are managing sick leave.

Councillor Tariq, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member, Children, Young People and Skills reported our approach has previously been too traditionalist. An attractive offer must be put forward for Social Workers going forward. An officer has been recruited to support the service specifically around communications and engagement going forward. We are looking at the Bury offer and what the message is to prospective employees.

Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director (Early Help and School Readiness) advised that we currently average at the FTE of 9 days per month in sickness levels.

Councillor Lancaster also asked how we are going to make sure children's voices are to be made a priority in the future.

In response Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills advised the Committee that an audio file has been produced by the Children and Young People in Care Council about what it feels like to be taken into care. It was reported that ensuring child experience is put into delivery plans to make sure it drives forward improvement.

Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director (Early Help and School Readiness) we have refreshed the Children's Strategic Partnership Board and we have created a Children's Participation and Voice Sub-group of that board.

Councillor Pilkington questioned if the reasons for people leaving and if this information is collated. Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director advised the average time for a member of staff to remain as a front-line social worker is two years so demonstrates this is a national problem. Many workers then move into agency work or other related areas. We have learnt it is key for the scaffolding around social workers to be safe and supported in their roles.

Councillor Wright requested further information on the issues identified with the MASH Team.

Sandra Bruce, Assistant Director (Early Help and School Readiness) advised that the MASH Team was co-located in the Police Station. The MASH Team has been brought back together with the ambition to move back into the Police Station.

Councillor Wright requested we hear back on how recruitment and retention of Social Workers is going at a suitable future meeting.

## **7 DEMAND FOR SCHOOL PLACES**

Councillor Tariq, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member Children, Young People and Skills provided an overview of the report. He advised it is projected there will be gaps over the next five years.

Paul Cooke advised the report sets out the forecasted demand for school places. Typical projections are for five years, and this covers that period. From primary

we take data from the Health Services such as births and add data from other variables such as faith preferences, building, housing, commuting out of Borough and changes in locations. Secondary Schools have a slightly longer leading time as we can see this developing based on current figures in primary.

The Birth rate in Bury has been in decline for a number of years and housing growth has also been limited reducing demands for school places. The report sets out the implications for this the reason it is important is the level of school funding declines due to the projections and can affect the viability and sustainability of individual Schools if action is not taken to mitigate it. The report gives us an advanced view of this and helps us to mitigate the risk of schools entering hardship. There is the potential for significant residential growth though the proposals of the GMSF and those demand pressures are not recognised in this report.

The report brings forward proposals to mitigate issues on schools that could be impacted. This may include leadership models, class sizes and executive heads that function over more than one school and this paper informs these discussions.

Admission arrangements for secondary schools is the use of catchment areas which is largely historical. They have not evolved as demographics and schools have changed. Proposed changes to admission arrangements critically reviewing the role of catchment areas.

Councillor Boles clarified that whilst the report discusses the drop in demand for primary schools it is not reflected in Bury East and Moorside.

Paul Cooke agreed, the issues are not consistent across the Borough. Sometimes the issue is popularity, whilst you aim to maintain parental preference equally we must ensure all our schools are sustainable and have places filled.

Councillor Boles Also Secondary School's planning do we have any idea on how the schools in the north of the Borough will be affected when the Radcliffe /school is developed.

Paul Cooke, Assistant Director of Learning advised we currently see a high level of demand in Secondary Schools, we currently have a temporary increase in capacity to use when needed and to scale back when not required. Admitting first year 7's in 2024 should help to offer more parents the option for preference. When the new Radcliffe schools starts it will offer a place to 750 pupils, over time this will increase to 1000 although it will grow incrementally so will take until September 2028 until it is full. Paul Cooke to provide some further more detailed responses by email.

Councillor McBriar asked why catchment areas haven't been looked at before and when will they be looked at again.

Paul Cooke Assistant Director of Learning advised admissions are looked at regularly however the idea of catchment areas has not. Any changes to admissions will be consulted on to a more modern distance which is standard across many councils. We will be going out to consultation next year but this academic year.

Councillor Tariq Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member Children, Young People and Skills advised school admissions has been a continual issue and catchment areas should not be seen as a political issue and hope to have all Council to support.

Councillor Lancaster questioned the report states that new secondary school in Radcliffe will respond to some of the localised pressures.

Paul Cooke, Assistant Director of Learning advised that the number of brownfield sites that are going to be brought forward which will make great demand pressures and the option to expand from 750 to 1000 is a definite option should those developments come to fruition.

Councillor Lancaster questioned when will the public consultation be likely to take place.

Isobel Booter, Director of Education and Skills advised the Education Business Plan did not consider the demands of staff time elsewhere in the service. The past 7 weeks of staff covering internally has impacted the Educational Business Plan and timings, at the next Education SLT we will look at when we can run that consultation.

It is important to note our faith schools will have their own admissions policy and the majority of academies choose to follow our admissions policy, but this is not compulsory. We have the duty to provide places, but academies are allowed to choose their own admission policies.

Councillor Lancaster questioned what the Council are doing to work with Schools with low uptake.

Paul Cooke, Assistant Director of Learning advised that this is typically a parental preference matter, so we work with all our schools to support way to improve interest in those schools.

Councillor Pilkington following the COP 26 meeting how does school transport match up with school places especially in light of the bee network, does this give greater control over cutting emissions outside schools and how do you come up with a fair system for parents to choose.

We have positive relationships with all our schools and trusts. It is an important role of ours to maintain quality and performing at the highest level. Conversations with transport for Greater Manchester as transport has followed the demand in parental preference this is demonstrated by demand not design.

Councillor Whitby asked if any nursey provisions at primary schools have closed and if so, will support to those schools/nurseries be offered as a result.

Paul Cooke, Assistant Director of Learning advised we have one nursery school which is Hoyle Nursey and is sustainable and viable. We have many primary schools which have nursery classes, one school made the decision to shut the nursey class however we have no plans to scale back maintained nursery classes.

Councillor Whitby asked more specifically about the impact on nursery provision linked to Primary Schools.

Paul Cooke Assistant Director of Learning further advised we are working with individual schools to ensure sustainability to not reduce preschool capacity. We have several schools that have really small numbers in their reception classes and to be viable going forward they have had to do mixed aged classes and others have now gone for an executive headteacher model to ensure their local school remains open.

Councillor Pilkington asked if one of the key aspirations going forward to address the inequality gap across the Borough.

Paul Cooke, Assistant Director of Learning advised if you look at the case the Council submitted to the DFE to our current plans to establish a new school in Radcliffe. It looked at the role housing employment, health and high-quality education played in the wider place shaping and growth of a community.

It was agreed:

The report be noted.

## **8       SCHOOLS UPDATE ON RE-OPENING**

Councillor Tariq, Deputy Leader, Cabinet Member Children Young People and Skills introduced the report.

Wendy Jackson, Service Lead for Quality Assurance and Performance thanked the Committee for asking for an update and thanked the Schools and Governors for the work they have done. Communication has been key throughout the pandemic in informing and helping our schools.

The vaccination programme is going well but take up has not been high however this is reflective at a Greater Manchester level too. Work has been done to help 16/17-year-olds with the uptake of the vaccine.

Councillor Wright asked a question regarding the school nursing teams being used for the vaccine role out; has it effected the nursing teams in schools.

Paul Cooke, Assistant Director of Learning advised that the utilisation of the school nursing team should not negative impact programmes in place such as the flu vaccination. We are currently doing some additional pop-up clinics which do impinge on schools nursing time but it should not affect nurses time.

Isobel Booler, Director of Education and Skills reported Primary headteachers have raised formally their school nurses have not been as available from the vaccination role out. This does illustrate challenges our schools have had to deal with they are expected to have made progress whilst dealing with covid notifications and high staff and pupil absence.

Councillor Wright wished to record the Committees thanks for all the work Isobel, Sandra and Paul have done stepping up in their respective roles and the hard work of teachers getting back into schools.

**9 URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

**COUNCILLOR S WRIGHT**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 6.30 pm and ended at 9.10 pm)**