

16 October 2023

Agenda Item 8

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

RESPONSE TO A RECOMMENDATION FROM THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SELECT COMMITTEE

Purpose of the Report

1. To provide a response to the recommendation made at the 20 March 2023 meeting of the Children and Families Select Committee:

“That the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, in consultation with officers, gives consideration to how local elected members can be most effectively communicated with and involved with the activity that takes place with academy trusts regarding the pupil place planning.”

Information

Response

2. The Local Authority (LA) holds the responsibility for pupil place planning and carries out a range of functions to monitor and forecast demand and sufficiency.
3. The Department for Education commissioned independent research in 2021 to look at the continuing role of local authorities in place planning. This reported that both local authorities and academies were strongly in favour of place planning remaining a local authority function rather than being devolved to schools and academies. The Local Authority actively engages with maintained schools, academies and academy trusts regarding place planning.
4. The Academies Act states that local authorities cannot instruct academies to undertake place planning mitigation strategies. Local authorities can seek only to collaborate with academies in addressing place planning and admissions issues and whilst there is a duty to collaborate, this limits the opportunities for County Councillors to be involved with the direct activity regarding pupil place planning with academy trusts.
5. The Cabinet Member is communicated with via Service Director briefings following Strategic School Place Planning Board feasibility and project monitoring discussions. Where ‘in principle’ agreements have been reached, these are subject to established decision-making processes. Where appropriate, this will include officer-led conversations with local Councillors, mindful of their in-depth knowledge at a constituency level.

6. County Councillors can be more directly involved with local academy trusts as members of Trust Boards where they will have greater involvement with the individual place planning activity of the academy trust.

Statutory and Policy Implications

7. This report has been compiled after consideration of the implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and, where such implications are material, they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

8. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the response from the Cabinet Member for Children and Families be noted.

Councillor Tracey Taylor
Cabinet Member for Children and Families

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Constitutional Comments (CD 05/10/23)

9. The recommendation proposed falls within the remit of Children and Families Select Committee by virtue of the Children and Families Select Committee's Terms of Reference set out in the Constitution.

Financial Comments (SS 04/10/23)

10. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

[Secondary School Place Planning – report to Children and Families Select Committee on 20 March 2023](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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