

NOTES OF A CONSULTATION MEETING BETWEEN ELECTED MEMBERS, OFFICERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE OXFORDSHIRE GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION (OGA) HELD AT COUNTY HALL ON WEDNESDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2017 AT 5.00pm

Present:

OGA Representatives: Carole Thomson [Chair] (CT), Judith Bennett (JB), Sue Haywood (SH), Stan Terry (ST) and Brenda Williams (BW).

OCC Elected Members and Officers: Cllr Hilary Hibbert-Biles (HH-B) [Cabinet Member for Public Health and Education], Cllr Michael Waine {MW}, Lucy Butler (LB) [Director for Children's Services], Janet Johnson (JJ), Roy Leach (RL) and Jo Moxon (JM).

In attendance: David Bramble [Clerk].

Apologies for absence: Jennie Perry (JP).

Jo Moxon was welcomed to her first meeting after taking up the appointment of Interim Acting Assistant Director for Education Services and introductions were made.

1. Notes of the last meeting

Notes of the meeting held on 20th July 2017 were agreed as a correct record of the meeting.

2. Matters arising from notes of 8th February

2.1 Multi Academy Trusts (MAT) and the role of the LA

RL reported that a consultation with all schools had been conducted during the summer with a response rate of 25% from maintained schools. A summary would appear in the current week's School News. A package of sustainable services is under development, costed in order that Schools could make comparisons with other providers. Forty percent of schools in the county were members of MATs (educating c. 55% of all pupils) and bi-lateral meetings between the LA and CEOs/Headteachers were held.

BW asked if a list of MAT's operating in the county could be provided to OGA as it could help new schools or those considering conversion to academy status in making decisions.

It was agreed a list would be provided. <http://schools.oxfordshire.gov.uk/cms/node/112>

Action: RL

CT advised that at the recent Governors' Open Meeting, queries were raised as to how schools could evaluate MATs and their sponsors. It was confirmed that LA advice was available to the governors and Headteachers of schools considering conversion.

3. Matters arising from notes of 20th July

3.1 Unitary authority proposal

This proposal had been superseded by the Growth Bid.

3.2 Home Education

Deferred pending outcome of Serious Case Review.

3.3 JP's meeting with LADO

CT to discuss this at the next OGA meeting with JP.

ACTION: CT

3.4 Carillion

No update available at this stage.

3.5 Concerns regarding pressure on staff

Locality support teams had identified some schools where there was a mismatch between LA priorities and the ability of schools to meet them. LB advised that conversations had taken place with a small number of schools in an attempt to close this gap but issues were rarely simple and often involved the Deputy Director of Social Care.

CT reminded all present of the responsibility of governors for the well-being of Headteachers and their staffs. Ian Jones (COTO representative) had referred to these responsibilities at the recent Education Scrutiny meeting.

JM advised that Hannah Farncombe and her team were investigating stress as a barrier to learning and looking at what support services were available. She also emphasised the need for early conversations especially when there was an impending exclusion. LB suggested that it would be more appropriate for Hannah to address this issue rather than Maria Godfrey as reported in the previous minutes.

HH-B commented that she had visited two schools earlier in the day and two issues had been raised.

It was agreed this subject should be a full agenda item for the next meeting on 17th May but CT suggested that in view of its importance some action in the interim was necessary. LB agreed and asked JM to prepare a progress report as soon as possible.

ACTION: JM

4. Governor Services Review

The Executive Summary of the 2017 Review had been circulated immediately prior to the meeting. Regrettably, the absence of Jennie Perry through illness restricted discussion of the review. LB advised that she had held a meeting with JP and CT pointed out that four members of the OGA Executive had made a significant input to the report. Main points emerging from the discussion were:

- Governors must have the ability to ask the right questions, particularly of performance data
- The perception that Governor Services was on a downward trend must be averted quickly
- National Leaders of Governance (NLGs) were not thought to be a panacea but there was an urgent need to develop Local Leaders of Governance (LLGs) similar to the role of Local Leaders of Education (LLEs) and develop a strong role for them
- Proactive steps needed to improve attendance at training and quality of training
- Publication of a Good Practice Guide should be considered.

LB advised that the next stage was for JP to transfer the outcomes of the review into an action plan. There would have to be a follow-up meeting between LB and JP after which OGA would be consulted.

Action: LB

5. Joint Local Area Inspection of Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

JJ tabled the Report of the Joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) SEND Inspection held 25th- 29th September 2017 and her Summary Report dated 13th December prepared for the Scrutiny Committee, which included initial actions taken to address the areas for improvement which relate to education. HMCI had determined that the LA and area's Clinical Commissioning Group were jointly responsible for submitting a written statement of action to Ofsted by 8th March 2018.

5 areas of significant weakness had been identified:

- The lack of clearly understood and effective lines of accountability for the implementation of the reforms
- The quality and rigour of self-evaluation and monitoring and the limited effect it has had on driving and securing improvement
- The quality of Education Health Care (EHC) plans
- The timeliness of the completion of EHC plans
- The high level of fixed-term exclusion of pupils in mainstream secondary schools who have special educational needs and social, emotional and mental health needs in particular.

Roy Leach retired from the meeting

The report recognised a number of strengths in relation to education and the effectiveness in meeting the needs of children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities. A positive response to the report was anticipated. It was noted that the LA was on track to have completed all conversions from statements to EHCPs (approximately 2,700) by the required deadline of March 2018. JJ pointed out that the action plan to clear the backlog of EHCPs was in place before the inspection.

It was acknowledged that Social Services were unable to provide all the support required by schools. MW felt that some schools were too insular and were reluctant to approach Special Schools for advice.

Actions to address areas for improvement in relation to education

- ❖ The Programme Board overseeing the implementation of the reforms would be Chaired by HH-B and would report to the Children's Trust and Oxfordshire's Health and Wellbeing Board, ensuring joint accountability
- ❖ Resources were being considered to strengthen services and provision for children with SEND. Some immediate decisions had been made including:
 - (a) Reversing the planned savings for the SEN casework team from April 2018 (£250k) and providing an extra £250k to maintain staffing levels in the casework team if DfE SEND grant ceases (April 2018)
 - (b) 3 additional education psychologists
 - (c) A manager to take the lead for improving behaviour.
- ❖ OCC's SEND action plan was being updated to address the areas of weakness identified and in line with Ofsted guidance. The SEND Programme Board will sign off the action plan before submission to DfE.
- ❖ A performance dashboard containing targets across education, health and care was being developed and would be monitored monthly by the Programme Board.

JJ raised the question of whether there should be a Governor representative on the Programme Board. HH-B was concerned that the sharp focus of the Board needed to be maintained by restricting membership to those with decision making powers.

6. Implications for schools in connection with the proposal to train a member of staff in every Secondary School, and ultimately in every Primary School in mental health first aid.

HH-B advised that the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) commission Oxfordshire Health for the provision of a mental health strategy for schools. Mental health staff train school staff to recognise where more help and support is needed.

There is a need to establish if it would be the CCG who get the new government funding or the local authority.

As research had indicated that 70% of SEND pupils had mental health issues it was felt by Government that there was an urgent need to provide more support for schools. In Oxfordshire secondary schools had an appointed school nurse and primary schools had a visiting nurse. There is a named mental health worker for each secondary school providing some direct CAMHS support but there were no mental health trained staff dedicated to primary schools.

It had been decided by Government that training should be provided to ensure that all schools had a member of staff trained to identify mental health needs. The recruitment of a trainer was in hand.

Janet Johnson retired from the meeting

7. Universal Credit rollout and implications for January 2018 census. Will there be any robust data concerning disadvantaged children ?

CT referred to media reports that it was possible for someone earning £60k to qualify for Universal Credit, pupil premium grant and free school meals with a significant impact on education funding. Some individuals had approached local MPs asking that the allegations were investigated but it was hoped OCC could obtain clarification. The provision of data relating to parents eligible for pupil premium and free school meals could also be addressed.

LB agreed to try and obtain clarification and asked that the Sutton Trust data from 2013 be sent to her.

Action: LB/CT

The meeting ended at 6.30pm.