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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMISSION

MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY, 10 APRIL 2018

Councillors Present: Tim Metcalfe, Ian Morrin, James Podger, Richard Somner (Vice-Chairman), Emma Webster (Chairman) and Laszlo Zverko

Also Present: Mark Browne (School Improvement Post 16 Adviser), Nick Carter (Chief Executive), Andy Day (Head of Strategic Support), Tessa Ford (School Improvement Advisor), Barbara Hunter (West Wood Farm Federation), Nikki McVeigh (St Joseph's RC Primary School), Neil Pilsworth (Francis Bailey Primary School), Ian Pearson (Head of Education Service), Steve Barford and Luke Bingham (Sovereign), Trig Thomas (Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service) and Jessica Bailiss (Policy Officer (Executive Support))

Apologies for inability to attend the meeting: Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter, Councillor Lee Dillon, Councillor Marigold Jaques and Councillor Mike Johnston

PART I

49. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9th January 2018 were approved as a true and correct record and signed by the Chairman, subject to the following amendments:

Page 9, Item 40, Financial Performance Report 2017/18 – Month Seven, penultimate paragraph: There was an 's' missing from **Councillor Laszlo Zverko**.

50. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Emma Webster declared an interest in Agenda Item 9, but reported that, as her interest was a personal or an other registrable interest, but not a disclosable pecuniary interest, she determined to remain to take part in the debate and vote on the matter.

51. Actions from previous Minutes

The Commission received an update report regarding actions recorded during the previous meeting. Actions 2, 3 and 4 had either been completed or were in hand and could therefore be removed from the list of actions arising from previous Commission meetings.

The Chairman referred to action number 4 and stated that Tandra Forster was scheduled to bring a report to the meeting of the Commission on the 10th July 2018, regarding Birchwood Care Home.

52. Consideration of Urgent Items

There were no urgent items to consider.

53. West Berkshire Forward Plan

The Commission considered the West Berkshire Forward Plan (Agenda Item 6) for the period covering 19 April to 30 June 2018.

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Andy Day stated that if there were any items that Members of the Commission felt needed to be considered, then they should let him know.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

54. Corporate Programme

Andy Day introduced the report (Agenda Item 7) to the Commission. David Lowe (Corporate Programme Manager) had attended the meeting on the 9th January 2018 and Andy Day suggested that David Lowe be invited back to give updates on the area of activity, on a six monthly basis.

The Chairman referred to the Council Strategy/Vision 2036: Hungerford Fire Station (Page 26) and noted that it was marked as complete. The Chairman requested clarification as to the role the Council had played in this project. Nick Carter reported that this stream of work had formed part of the One Public Estate Programme and had been included for that purpose only. It was recognised that the Hungerford Fire Station had been led and delivered by the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service. Nick Carter suggested that the project be removed as it was complete.

RESOLVED that:

- David Lowe should be invited to attend meetings of the Commission on a six monthly basis.
- The Hungerford Fire Station Project be removed from the West Berkshire Council Corporate Programme.
- The changes to the work programme be noted.

55. Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme

The Commission considered its Work Programme for 2018/2019 (Agenda Item 8). For clarification purposes the Chairman highlighted that Item 3 - Improvement Plan for Birchwood Care Home had remained on the Work Programme. This had been considered at the meeting of the Commission on the 9th January however, this issue had been retained on the Work Programme to ensure that satisfactory progress was being maintained.

The Chairman reminded Members that they needed to consider what topics should be considered at future Commission meetings.

Andy Day added that the Commission should be involved in the formation of the new Council Strategy which would cover the next four years. Two workshops were scheduled in June and September 2018 and Andy Day would ensure the dates were added to the Work Programme.

RESOLVED that the dates for the two Council Strategy workshops be added to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission Work Programme 2018/19.

56. Fire Safety

(Councillor Emma Webster declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 9 by virtue of the fact that she was one of West Berkshire Council's appointed representative on the Royal Berkshire Fire Authority. As her interest was personal and not prejudicial or a disclosable pecuniary interest she determined to remain to take part in the debate.)

The Chairman invited Steve Barford and Luke Bingham from Sovereign and Trig Thomas from Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) to the meeting.

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Richard Turner introduced his report (Agenda Item 9), which provided an update on the activities and the status regarding fire safety in West Berkshire buildings following the Grenfell Tower fire on 14th June 2017. Richard Turner reported that he was a manager within the Property Services Team and was responsible for leading on the area of fire safety.

Following on from the incident and the communication from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) that followed, West Berkshire Council instigated a series of actions and activities to ensure the fire safety of its buildings was both compliant and well managed.

Communications from Government were still being received regularly and often included actions. A group of Officers and Members had been formed to deal with all matters.

Richard Turner confirmed that West Berkshire Council (WBC) did not own any high rise residential blocks and neither did Sovereign. Steve Barford reported that officially a building had to be 18 storeys high to be considered as 'high rise', however, RBFRS suggested that any building six storeys or over should be checked. The highest residential building that Sovereign owned was six storeys high although there were other six storey buildings at the Racecourse development and Parkway. There were also eight private high rise blocks located at Park Way and the Racecourse and fire safety advice for these buildings had been provided by RBFRS. WBC uploaded the details of all buildings onto a database including details of privately owned residential blocks.

Richard Turner reported that a questionnaire had been submitted by the Council's Education Service answering questions posed by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and no follow on actions had been required.

Richard Turner reported that the Care Quality Commission confirmed to WBC that they had communicated directly with service providers.

A fire safety questionnaire had also been issued to all 'Responsible Persons' for individual sites, both WBC schools and non-school sites, to establish the sufficiency of current Fire Risk Assessments (FRAs) and the existence of any Aluminium Composite Material cladding. Richard Turner confirmed that there was a rolling programme to ensure FRAs were kept up to date going forward. If there was ever uncertainty about cladding, Richard Turner reported that an Officer would visit the site. He was satisfied that all risk assessments were up to date and that there were no issues in relation to cladding.

Richard Turner reported that WBC Property Services had submitted on the government portal 'Delta', information on private residential properties, specifically related to high rise properties and cladding presence.

Richard Turner reported that in December 2017, WBC had received a copy of the interim report of the independent review of building regulations and fire safety (by Dame Judith Hackitt DBE FREna), which had found that the current regulatory system for ensuring fire safety in high rise and complex buildings was not fit for purpose and listed what the failings were. The report had set the direction for change under six broad areas. Richard Turner stated that it was expected that the final report would be available in spring 2018 and WBC would review any recommendations and assess the potential impact for West Berkshire.

The Chairman invited Trig Thomas from RBFRS to give an overview of the response by the Fire Service.

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Trig Thomas reported that Fire Officers had been sent out immediately to visit every high rise building (158 in total across the county), to ensure that there was no fire risk and to gather evidence on cladding. This activity had been completed within a month of the Grenfell Tower incident. A Memorandum of Understanding had been drawn up, which was bound by two laws: the Housing Act and the Fire Safety Order. WBC had been particularly prompt in signing up to the Memorandum of Understanding. All but three buildings had been audited in the area and this was because they were not yet occupied.

The final report from the DCLG was expected in the near future and RBFRS had proactively fed evidence in to the process. The RBFRS were beginning to return to "normal" and they were working with local authorities to help keep residents safe.

Trig Thomas concluded that although cladding was the focus of the investigation, Investigators were also responsible for checking all aspects of fire safety when visiting residential properties. All residential properties in West Berkshire had passed the investigations. There had been some requests of informal action however, no significant fire safety concerns had been raised.

The Chairman invited Steve Barford and Luke Bingham from Sovereign to give an overview of the organisation's response.

Steve Barford reported that Sovereign's experience had been much the same as WBC's in that it had dealt with a large amount of communication from central Government. Checks on properties and external cladding had been carried out immediately following the 14th June 2017. Sovereign was fortunate in that it did not have any high rise properties in West Berkshire and the tallest residential properties in its ownership included four, five and six storey. Because of this Sovereign had focused its checks of properties over three storeys high.

Steve Barford reported that changes in building design had formed a significant part of the review. Advice given as part of the Hackitt Review had been fully taken into account by the organisation, which also had an excellent local relationship with RBFRS.

Steve Barford commented that in 2017 there had been six fires in Sovereign properties located within West Berkshire. Three were linked to tumble dryers; one had been a result of arson; one a result of hoarding and one had been classed as 'unknown'.

Luke Bingham added that the inspection process had given residents reassurance and residents had been more cooperative in light of the Grenfell incident. In the past residents had accused the organisation of being overzealous particularly with regards to the removal of trampolines from premises, which had been identified by the organisation as a risk to fire safety. Sovereign also took an active approach to reduce hoarding.

For vulnerable residents, Sovereign had 24 hour care line facilities. If an alarm was triggered within a property of a vulnerable person, then RBFRS were automatically called.

Councillor Ian Morrin noted that although cladding had been the focus of the report, others issues could be picked up as part of the process and he asked if there was any knowledge of what other issues there could be.

Trig Thomas stated that he had no information in relation to Grenfell Tower. However, an issue that had been identified as part of the review was compartmentation that had been compromised. Trig Thomas explained that compartmentation was the way a fire could spread around a building. It was thought that de-compartmentation reviews would be a likely outcome of the Hackitt Review.

Councillor Morrin asked if there had been any concerns raised specifically about properties in West Berkshire. Trig Thomas reported that one building had shown

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evidence of slight de-compartmentation. Other areas in the country had faced much larger problems in terms of de-compartmentation. He reiterated that the issue was about keeping a fire contained e.g. within one flat.

The Chairman referred to the 'Stay Put' Policy and commented that if people were trying to get out of a building when the Fire Service were trying to enter, then this could compromise the actions of the Fire Service.

Councillor Laszlo Zverko referred to a recent news article that had detailed fire risks as the result of faulty appliances. Councillor Zverko also noted that three of the fires within Sovereign properties had been caused by appliances and therefore asked what else could be done to prevent these fires. Trig Thomas commented that it was important that people registered their appliances in case there was a safety risk discovered, which meant an appliance needed to be recalled. Every fire was investigated and it could be identified if an appliance had been the cause. The RBFRS also carried out 'health and wellbeing visits' to vulnerable residents where they were advised on matters such as not overloading plug sockets. Most importantly Trig Thomas stressed that smoke detectors should be installed within all properties and preferably a sprinkler system too. Trig Thomas stressed that installing sprinkler systems would save lives.

Steve Barford reported that Sovereign had a regime regarding electrical testing within its properties including a very efficient trip switch. Sovereign's Maintenance Service Team was also trained to look for possible risks e.g. overloaded sockets, and were constantly offering advice. Steve Barford stated that although there was no plan to install sprinkler systems retrospectively, Sovereign was looking to install sprinkler systems within the next three to four years. Steve Barford confirmed that all properties owned by Sovereign had been fitted with smoke detectors and these were tested on an annual basis.

Luke Bingham commented that domestic appliances were a challenge. Mobility scooters were an area of concern as they were often unregulated and residents often charged the battery for a scooter within their home. Mobility scooters were often also purchased second hand, which also posed a fire risk. As a result Sovereign were building scooter stores within residential areas. Steve Barford reported that Sovereign had created a video in partnership with RBFRS, which illustrated the fire risks associated with mobility scooters. The Chairman requested that this video be shared with Members of the Commission.

The Chairman understood that when an incident like Grenfell Tower happened, fear amongst residents increased and she asked what was being done to reassure residents. Steve Barford reported that Sovereign had a Property Compliance Team which went out and visited properties. Luke Bingham commented that residents were happier to comply with advice around fire safety, whereas previously they had questioned the movement of equipment. Officers also played an important role in reaffirming to residents the dangers around certain health equipment and ensuring residents flagged the use of new equipment that could pose a fire risk e.g. oxygen tanks.

The Chairman asked if the Fire Service were involved in the pre-planning stage of residential development. As far as she was aware the Fire Service was not a consultee in the pre-planning stage. If this was the case the Chairman felt that the Commission could have a role to play in enforcing RBFRS became a consultee in the pre-planning stage of residential properties. Councillor Tim Metcalfe speculated whether this was something that fell under building control.

Trig Thomas confirmed that the Fire Service was consulted on planning applications however, not within the pre-planning stage. The Fire Service could offer advice however, this did not have to be acted upon. It was thought that this might form part of the

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recommendations as a result of the Hackitt Review. The Chairman voiced her concern that if advice by the Fire Service was not adopted then this could pose significant risks.

Trigg Thomas stated that he would continue to push for sprinklers to be installed within properties in order to improve safety. If the Fire Service was involved in the pre-planning stage then advice could be acted upon. Recommendations made at a later stage often meant developers incurred higher costs.

Councillor Richard Somner stated that caution was required with regards to making changes prior to the final Hackitt Report being published. It was important that a review was undertaken at the appropriate time once the final report had been published, to avoid a repeat of the process. The Chairman agreed that this would be helpful.

The Chairman asked the Sovereign representatives if the organisation provided white goods, or if residents provided these themselves. Luke Bingham confirmed that Sovereign did not currently provide white goods apart from on new developments where white goods were integrated. Sovereign properties were inspected on a regular basis and any integrated white goods were PAT tested.

There were a number of triggers that made a person more vulnerable to fire and Luke Bingham commented that a number of these triggers were relevant to some of Sovereign's residents. Sovereign could help residents to locate white goods through second hand sales. There was good work going on across the organisation to help support those who were more vulnerable.

The Chairman stressed to all those in attendance that smoke detectors should be tested on a weekly basis.

The Chairman thanked all Officers for attending the meeting and commented that it was likely that the topic would be re-visited once the final Hackitt Report was published.

RESOLVED that:

- The video created in partnership between RBFRS and Sovereign on the fire risks associated with mobility scooters be circulated to Members of the commission.
- The topic of Fire Safety be revisited at a future OSMC meeting once the full Hackitt report had been published.

57. Social Mobility

Nick Carter introduced the report (Agenda item 10), which aimed to brief Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Commission regarding West Berkshire's results for the measures used by the Social Mobility Commission in the 'State of the Nation 2017: Social Mobility in Great Britain' report. Nick Carter stated that the report had been published in November 2017 and had received a lot of press coverage, including a strap line that insinuated that West Berkshire was not a good place to grow up in if you were poor.

The report showed that West Berkshire had 'cold spots' in relation to young people, for example for free school meals and attainment and as a result, the overall index of social mobility placed West Berkshire within the bottom 20% of districts in England. Nick Carter drew attention to section 5.2 (5) 'local policies adopted by local authorities and employers can positively influence outcomes for disadvantaged residents' and commented that this was the key issue for the Commission to focus on whilst looking ahead to what needed to be done.

Councillor Graham Bridgman explained that Catalin Bogos had produced the covering report and had wished for a couple of points to be made on his behalf. The first point had related to 5.2 (5) as mentioned by Nick Carter and the second point related to 5.2 (4),

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which stated that there was no link between the affluence of an area and its ability to sustain high levels of social mobility. The Cotswolds and West Berkshire were mentioned as being two examples of 'cold spots' of social mobility even though they were amongst the least deprived areas in the country. Councillor Bridgman also drew Members' attention to Appendix A, which listed the 16 indicators used to measure social mobility.

The Chairman welcomed Ian Pearson to the meeting who gave a presentation to the Commission on social mobility in relation to children and young people (circulated with agenda paperwork).

Ian Pearson reported that following the publication of the annual Social Mobility Commissioning Report in June 2017, Councillor Lynne Doherty had asked what lessons might be learned to improve outcomes for disadvantaged children and young people in West Berkshire. The presentation slides were focused on each section of the report. A gap had been identified in the area of Free School Meals (FSMs) and as West Berkshire was performing well in other areas, the area of FSMs was accentuated.

The Social Mobility annual report was divided into four life stages (Early Years, Schools, Young People and Working Lives), which were scored on a traffic light scale. Early Years and Young People were scored as 'amber' and young people and working lives as 'red'. For each life stage Ian Pearson gave an overview of the area and then lessons learnt/recommendations.

The Department for Education (DfE) had written its own document in response to the Social Mobility Commissioning Report called 'Unlocking Talent, Fulfilling Potential: A Plan for Improving Social Mobility through Education'. In its response to the report the DfE highlighted that 1.9 million more children were in 'good' or 'outstanding' schools since 2010. In West Berkshire 95% of schools had been rated either 'good' or 'outstanding' by Ofsted. The DfE had also highlighted the following points:

- Talent was spread evenly across the country but opportunity was not.
- Issues could not be tackled quickly and there was no simple solution.
- It was about relentless focus and the application of energy and resources where they could impact most.
- 'No community left behind'.

The DfE had four ambitions and there were as follows:

- Close the 'word gap' in early years;
- Close the attainment gap in schools while continuing to raise standards;
- High quality post-16 education choices for all young people, and;
- Everyone achieving their full potential in rewarding careers.

Ian Pearson moved on to talk about the West Berkshire position. West Berkshire had been ranked 265th of the 324 districts placing it in the bottom 20% in England. Ian Pearson stated that this was not a good position to be in however when other aspects of performance were viewed, the picture was not as disappointing.

Ian Pearson introduced Officers and Headteachers to the Commission meeting, who would talk about each area in more detail and the work that was taking place across the district.

Avril Allenby (Service Manager for Early Years) raised the following points:

- Almost half (46%) of FSM eligible pupils failed to reach a good level of development (GLD).
- A similar proportion of disadvantaged children (46%) failed to achieve GLD.
- A similar proportion of those funded as two year olds (45%) failed to reach GLD.

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- When looking at overall progress for children aged five, West Berkshire compared favourably to the national average.
- The gap between the bottom 20% (disadvantaged children) and those overall was smaller when compared to other areas.
- There was a discrepancy with the Early Years Pupil Premium funding amount (£330 per child). There was slow uptake of this funding which could be awarded once a child turned three years old. This was because parents had to physically apply for the funding.
- 21 schools in 2017 had less than five pupils eligible for FSMs and no schools had more than nine pupils.
- Schools with children receiving FSMs were invited to network meetings to share good practice.
- Targeted robust discussions took place with Headteachers.
- Data collections took place throughout the year, rather than just at the end to ensure progress was tracked.
- At pre-school stage, there were a number of initiatives including the 'Flying Start' project, which helped to support children transitioning onto school.
- The aim was to bring together professionals and families.
- The Every Child a Talker (ECaT) project helped to build up language amongst young children.
- A bid had been submitted to Greenham Common Trust for the Imagination Library. This ensured children aged 0-5 had access to books and it was hoped that this scheme would be rolled out to other areas in need in the future.
- Family Hubs worked with schools and early years' settings to help support school readiness. These encouraged parents to play and learn with their child.

Councillor Tim Metcalfe noted that there was not 100% take up of places within early years. Avril Allenby clarified that this had not been in relation to place but to children eligible for Pupil Premium funding. A lot of information had to be supplied by parents applying for this funding and some were reluctant to provide this information. Councillor Metcalfe asked if there would be ample facilities if all eligible children were to take up the funding and Avril Allenby confirmed that there was, as there were a large range of providers across the early year's sector.

Tessa Ford (School Improvement Advisor) raised the following points:

- She was the lead for Pupil Premium (PP) funding within schools.
- There was a small percentage of disadvantaged pupils in West Berkshire.
- Nationally 14% of children received FSMs, compared to 6-7% in West Berkshire.
- Nationally 31% of children received PP funding compared to 16.5% in West Berkshire.
- The percentage of children in West Berkshire receiving the PP funding had remained relatively static. However few were choosing to claim PP funding over FSMs and therefore it could be assumed that they were more disadvantaged.
- As had been mentioned by Avril Allenby, there were only small numbers of children in West Berkshire receiving the PP funding and this formed part of the problem. If there were larger numbers of children on PPF it would make the issue easier to deal with.
- In KS2, 17% of pupils were classed as having Special Educational Needs (SEN) in West Berkshire. When looking at those receiving PP funding; 35% were SEN. The figures nationally were higher.
- The introduction of Universal Credit (UC) would change the criteria for accessing FSMs and it was uncertain how this would affect data.

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- Ofsted had always been positive regarding PP provision in West Berkshire and therefore the data presented in the Social Mobility report had been particularly disappointing as it did not reflect the hard work that was taking place by WBC or schools, where PP children were a top priority.
- The numbers of children receiving the PP had risen over the last three to four years. Improving the quality of teaching was the most important area for schools and WBC to focus on.
- If each school could get one more child receiving PP funding though reading writing and maths, then the rate in West Berkshire would be increased to 52%, which was just above the national average. This highlighted the issue that only small numbers were involved.
- Regarding KS4, if progress could be improved throughout KS2, then children often continued to improve into KS4. Eight subjects were, however, sometimes too many for some children and schools would need to make a judgement call on this.
- A strategic plan was drawn up each year on how attainment across West Berkshire would be raised. Raising attainment was the key focus over 'closing the gap'.
- There was a KS1 cluster group of ten schools. The aim with these schools was to narrow the gap as much as possible through early intervention and parental involvement.
- Other initiatives that were taking place across West Berkshire on improving attainment and narrowing the gap included conferences, training and PP funding reviews.
- There were vulnerable group meetings held which included Headteachers, SEN Officers and PP leads.
- Tessa Ford had created a PP toolkit for West Berkshire, which supported schools in carrying out self-assessments.
- A peer Headteacher PP challenge would be taking place, working with nine schools across West Berkshire.

Nikki McVeigh (Headteacher at St Joseph's RC Primary School) raised the following points:

- The determinants for pupils were the key.
- It was about looking at each child; not accepting any excuses and putting the right interventions in place.
- At her school there were a small number of PP pupils. These students sometimes stood out because of their background.
- Schools needed to advocate PP children and work with their parents. It could sometimes be incredibly challenging getting parents to engage.
- Nikki McVeigh worked with teachers to carry out structured conversations with parents. This involved looking at things that could be done to improve the situation for a child.
- It was about looking at the school, its culture and everyone being determined for each child.

Barbara Hunter (Executive Headteacher for Westwood Farm) raised the following points:

- In reflection she questioned what made West Berkshire different, particularly as there were smaller numbers of children accessing the PP funding.
- It was about improving Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) programmes in schools.

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- Barbara Hunter had worked in a school in a deprived area, prior to her time in West Berkshire and she felt that there was a much greater need for every child to have PSHE on their agenda.
- There was a struggle to sustain teaching at a high enough calibre.
- Children at school in West Berkshire were generally well behaved and compliant.
- Because of the small numbers of children on PP funding, they had not been focused on to a great enough degree.
- Schools needed to re-focus their efforts and those responsible for PP pupils needed to make PP pupils their sole purpose.

Neil Pilsworth (Deputy Headteacher at Francis Bailey Primary School), raised the following points:

- Teachers' attendance was integral to a child's progress and attainment.
- Focus needed to be placed on learning and improving student outcomes.
- A key barrier was that the particular children in question often seemed distracted. This could make it difficult for teachers to engage them.

Mark Browne (Schools Improvement Advisor – post 16) raised the following points:

- Disadvantaged as a label ended at 16 and there was no post 16 premium.
- If a child had not made up the 'gap' by the time they reached 16 years old it was unlikely that they would do so post 16. Disadvantage continued with young people and was not something that schools or education could fix as it was often a wider family issue.
- Although 16/17 year olds were tracked, there was no requirement to track them after this age.
- NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) for 16 and 17 year olds in West Berkshire was at 2.4%.
- Of those who were classed as disadvantaged (in receipt of FSMs in year 11) 4% (5 young people) were NEET. This was compared to 2% (29 young people) of young people who had not been classed as disadvantaged.
- 7% (disadvantaged) had been undecided in May (2017) in Year 11 regarding where they wanted to go onto after school, compared to 2.5% (not disadvantaged).
- Those who were disadvantaged were not being prioritised in terms of progression and were less likely to make a positive transition from school.
- There was a careers network within schools and the Careers Enterprise Company often sent business mentors to work within schools.
- Beyond 17 it was unknown which young people were previously disadvantaged.
- It seemed that if pupils had not made enough progress at year 11, they stood very little chance of making the progress up at a later stage.
- At A Level stage there was half a grade difference between disadvantaged children and non-disadvantaged. Nationally this was only a third.
- Attainment and progress needed to be balanced.
- Many opportunities might be beyond the reach of those who were low skilled or low qualified. It was difficult to know because 24 year olds were not tracked.
- Looking at benefit data, it was indicated that young people were getting jobs however, were not able to compete for jobs that offered more opportunities. Not obtaining GCSEs closed the door on many jobs offering more opportunities.
- There was no national funding or programme for NEET. Many young people were entering into zero hour contract jobs. More entry level opportunities were required.

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The Chairman thanked all Officers for their comprehensive reporting of what was taking place in West Berkshire.

Councillor Lynne Doherty stated that she had spent the last 18 months looking at the issues and a lot of work was taking place across West Berkshire to improve the situation. There was no immediate solution for the problem, however, in Councillor Doherty's opinion there was more that could be done. Schools needed to put more effort into closing the gap within the first 100 days. The problem started even earlier and this was apparent though programmes such as 'Every Child a Talker'. Councillor Doherty fully supported the work that was taking place by the Family Hubs to identify issues early on. Councillor Doherty had felt very frustrated when reading the Social Mobility report and had noted that it only concerned small numbers, which made it particularly difficult for staff.

Councillor Bridgman noted that 95% of children in West Berkshire were attending schools rated as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. This did not correlate with West Berkshire's ranking within the Social Mobility report. He asked if children who were deprived were often not attending schools rated as 'Good' or 'outstanding'. If this was the case then it would indicate that these schools were not performing as well as the ones in affluent areas.

Ian Pearson reported that what the Social Mobility report picked up reflected the national situation. Government gave particular focus to areas with lower performing schools and these areas often had a high percentage of schools rated below 'Good'.

Councillor Ian Morrin asked for clarification on whether disadvantaged children were attending 'Good' or 'Outstanding' schools and it was confirmed that generally they were.

Tessa Ford stressed that schools had improved. Councillor Morrin commented that the data seemed statistically unimportant. He had noted that disadvantaged children displayed particular behaviours and he felt that some children that were not disadvantaged probably displayed these behaviours too and asked what was being done for this group of children who did not attract PP funding. Nikki McVeigh reported that it was about a schools ethos and culture. The same approach that was taken with PP children was also applied to non PP children. It was about a shift in school culture. Nikki McVeigh was aware that there was a high cohort of families who were just coping in addition to those who were receiving the PP funding.

Avril Allenby commented on the importance of early years support. Parents often attended sessions with young children because they wanted to know what they could do to help their child develop. An overview had been given on what was being done for the smaller disadvantaged group as this was where targets were set however, there was a lot of other work and programmes in place that all children could access.

Councillor James Podger thanked Officers for their very informative presentation and stated that he had four questions as follows:

- 1) Did the service understand the factors that determined lower quality of nursery provision?
- 2) What actions had been implemented by the service to impact on the quality of provision?
- 3) Did the service have an understanding of the percentage of children benefitting from free childcare entitlement that had places with providers rated less than 'good'? and finally;
- 4) What mitigation actions were in place to ensure minimum negative impact on children accessing lower quality provision?

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Avril Allenby reported that results the data used within the report were out of date. Free provision in West Berkshire had risen from 79 providers to 135. The biggest area of growth was child minders and there was some concern about capacity to support child minders. If a nursery was rated any less than 'good' by Ofsted then an action plan would be put in place and they would not be permitted to take on further two year olds accessing the free entitlement. WBC offered an 'advice line' and they were also able to buy into a subscription. WBC had a good working relationship with many of the early years' settings in the district. Nursery schools rated as 'outstanding' were also used to mentor those performing less well.

Councillor Metcalfe noted that Social Mobility was measured in academic attainment and good academic attainment led onto better jobs. He noted that there was a struggle to sustain teaching at a high enough calibre. Those wanting to become teachers had to obtain a degree and Councillor Metcalfe felt that the process to become a teacher had caused a lack of enthusiasm in the system.

In response to Councillor Metcalfe's point, Nikki McVeigh reported that a lot of work was taking place with students to help them think about what they wanted to be when they left education. Barbara Hunter added that press coverage of the profession often did not help as it was portrayed as being target focussed and pressurised and as a result Barbara Hunter felt that the profession was in trouble. The cost of living in West Berkshire was also very high, which made it difficult for those becoming teachers to live in the district. Councillor Metcalfe felt that more time was required for teachers to be able to bond with students and Nikki McVeigh reported that work was carried out with children early on to help find out what their aspirations were.

The Chairman referred to negative coverage of the Social Mobility report and asked if this had impacted upon the recruitment or retention of staff and it was confirmed that there was no evidence to suggest that it had.

The Chairman noted the balance that was required between attainment and progress however, was aware that employers were more concerned with results. The Chairman asked how this issue could collectively be turned around. Mark Browne stated that it was a real issue. Recently he had been aware that the Mercedes Garage had been trying to recruit to an entry level job however, had been asking for applicants to possess A levels. Mark Browne was of the view that to turn the issue around a huge culture change would be required. He felt that it was an issue that should be considered by the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) as it could help to influence employers. Employers should be encouraged to speak to Officers supporting students to help identify which ones would be able to fulfil a role.

The Chairman felt it would be helpful to invite the LEP and/or the Chamber of Commerce to a future Commission meeting. This would provide an opportunity to present some of the points that had been raised to employers.

Councillor Morrin felt that it was about gaining a holistic approach with regards to support, from a baby up until working life. From Councillor Morrin's experience, many employers were keen to get young people in to work however, there needed to be a basic level of competence. As an employer he stated that he would be minded to opt for competence and capability over just capability.

Councillor Richard Somner noted that 18 – 24 year olds were not tracked and queried why this was the case. Mark Browne reported that to collect data on this cohort would require a huge amount of work. The DfE had attempted to collect information on 18 year olds however, had found it to be an unfruitful process. Mark Browne reported that they were often able to find out when young people had moved on to further education

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however, they did not know if those young people had carried on into their second year. Councillor Somner felt that this might be something the LEP could help with.

Councillor Somner was not aware that someone necessarily had to have a degree to become a teacher and was of the belief that training could start from A Level stage. He asked if there was adequate support for those who did not have a degree to become teachers. Barbara Hunter believed that a person needed a degree to become a teacher. Avril Allenby reported that a degree provided someone with the basic skills they required to become a teacher.

Ian Pearson concluded that professionals needed to retain ambition for children. An approach of 'no child is left behind' needed to be adopted.

The Chairman stated that teachers within her ward and across the district had been disappointed at the way the press had portrayed the results from the Social Mobility report for West Berkshire. The Chairman thanked everybody for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED that:

- Further thought should be given to inviting the LEP along to a future meeting to discuss points that had been raised in discussion with Education colleagues around employment.
- The report was noted.

58. Key Accountable Performance 2017/18: Quarter Three

Councillor Graham Bridgman introduced the report (Agenda item 11), which had been presented to the Executive of 29th March 2018 and had been noted.

Andy Day reported that performance was positive for quarter three. Four of the actions rated as amber or red were areas that were not within West Berkshire Council's control including the delay of London Road Industrial Estate; the delay of the Sterling Cables project; Super-Fast Broadband and Building Communities Together.

The Chairman stated that she was also concerned about affordable housing and more needed to be done to improve the planning process. Councillor Ian Morrin commented that the Council had little control over what applications were submitted. The Chairman noted this however, felt that there was a problem with the planning process, particularly with regards to major applications and the speed they were able to move through the system.

59. Items Called-in following the Executive on 29 March 2018

No items were called-in following the last Executive meeting.

60. Councillor Call for Action

There were no Councillor Call for Action.

61. Petitions

There were no petitions to be received at the meeting.

(The meeting commenced at 6.30 pm and closed at 9.20 pm)

CHAIRMAN

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Date of Signature