



Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

Time and Date

10.00 am on Thursday, 18th April, 2024

Place

Diamond Rooms 1 and 2 - Council House

Public Business

1. **Apologies and Substitutions**
2. **Declarations of Interests**
3. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)
 - a) To agree the minutes of the meeting held on 1st February 2024
 - b) Matters Arising
4. **School Admissions and School Sufficiency** (Pages 7 - 14)

Briefing Note of the Director for Education and Skills
5. **Work Programme and Outstanding Issues** (Pages 15 - 20)

Briefing Note of the Director of Law and Governance
6. **Any Other Business**

Any other items of business which the Chair decides to take as matters of urgency because of the special circumstances involved.

Julie Newman, Director of Law and Governance, Council House, Coventry

Wednesday, 10 April 2024

Note: The person to contact about the agenda and documents for this meeting is Tom Robinson, Governance Services, Email: tom.robinson@coventry.gov.uk

Membership: Councillors J Blundell, Mrs S Hanson (Co-opted Member), Mr D Jackson (Co-opted Member), S Keough, T Khan, R Lancaster, A Masih, S Nazir, E M Reeves, CE Thomas (Chair), A Tucker and Mr G Vohra (Co-opted Member)

By invitation: Councillor Dr K Sandhu (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills)

Public Access

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Tom Robinson

Governance Services, Email: tom.robinson@coventry.gov.uk

Coventry City Council
Minutes of the Meeting of Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)
held at 11.00 am on Thursday, 1 February 2024

Present:

Members: Councillor CE Thomas (Chair)
Councillor J Blundell
Councillor S Keough
Councillor R Lancaster
Councillor S Nazir
Councillor E M Reeves

Co-Opted Members: Mrs S Hanson and David Jackson

Other Present
(by invitation): A Gallagher – Headteacher, Foxford Community School, Vice
Chair of Secondary Partnership

Employees (by
Directorate):

Education and Skills K Nelson (Chief Partnerships Officer), R Sugars (Director), M
Ledgard

Law and Governance G Holmes, E Jones, T Robinson

Apologies: Councillors T Khan, A Masih and A Tucker
Councillor Dr K Sandhu (Cabinet Member for Education and
Skills)
Mr G Vohra

Public Business

28. Declarations of Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

29. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 December 2023 were signed as a true record.

There were no matters arising.

30. Coventry Education Performance 2023

The Board considered a briefing note of the Director for Education and Skills which provided an update on Coventry's 2023 performance in the following areas:

- Ofsted profile

- Trends in pupil numbers
- Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)
- Phonics and Key Stage 1
- Key Stage 2
- Key Stage 4 (provisional)
- Age 16-19 attainment
- Post-16 participation in education, employment and training
- Attendance and exclusions
- Difference in performance between males and females
- Performance of vulnerable groups

The briefing note detailed the vision of the Coventry Education Partnership which has high expectations for children and young people to achieve their full potential whatever their culture or background. Statutorily it is the responsibility of school leaders to secure improvement in their school, but as part of our working partnership with all schools and settings, the LA acts as champions of educational excellence, forging strong professional relationships and networks.

Specifically, the Coventry Education Partnership prioritises enhancing the quality of education in Coventry for the 2023/24 academic year while bringing together the local authority, the primary school networks, the secondary collaboratives, and school-to-school support in supporting schools on their improvement journey. Specific priorities for each key stage include early language development, phonics, reading, writing, maths, and post-16 outcomes.

Overall, most schools in Coventry have improved their Ofsted ratings in the last 12 months, but the proportion of children attending a good or better school is still below national average. Many inspections are imminent and positive outcomes are expected, which will improve Coventry's Ofsted profile. However, the challenges faced by some schools due to Covid-related disruptions remain.

In terms of pupil population trends, Coventry has experienced a steady increase in pupil numbers, free school meal eligibility, non-white British children, and SEN support over the last five years. The data in the briefing note supports the changes in these indicators from 2019 to 2023 and compares them with national and statistical neighbours. It also highlights the implications of these trends for the provision and quality of education in Coventry.

Similarly, the data explores the attainment and progress of pupils in Coventry at different key stages, from EYFS to KS5. It highlights the areas of improvement and challenge for each stage and compares Coventry's performance with national and statistical neighbours. It shows that Coventry has improved its performance in most measures, especially in EYFS, KS1, and KS4, but remains below national average in some areas, such as reading at KS2 and A level grades at KS5. It also shows that Coventry has a positive Progress 8 score at KS4, indicating that pupils make more progress than expected nationally.

Additionally, the briefing note identified that Coventry has a high rate of pupils progressing to education, employment or training after completing their 16 to 18 study, and a low rate of NEETs (Not in Education, Employment or Training). There has also been a significant increase in the number of A level entries and the level

3 cohort, compared to national averages. This reflects the aspirations and achievements of Coventry's young people.

Overall, Coventry's performance is in line with or above its statistical neighbours for most measures at all key stages of education – these statistical neighbours are directly comparable to Coventry because of similarities in size and other important characteristics. For many (but not all) of the key performance measures Coventry is below national average and this reflects the characteristics of the city in comparison to all Local Authorities nationally. However, national averages remain the target and all Coventry schools continue to strive to meet or exceed national benchmarks. It is important to note that as children and young people progress in education within Coventry their performance continually improves and by the time they reach the end of their school years they secure positive destinations, i.e. high levels of education, employment, or training. This is testament to the whole system, the strong partnership between Coventry education providers and a relentless focus on next steps.

Education officers and a representative of the Coventry Primary Partnership attended the meeting and provided the Board with a detailed presentation that covered the headlines of the briefing note including:

- Using the 2023 data and comparisons made to data collected from 2019 and 2021/2022.
- Headline achievements in 2023
- Attendance and behaviour trends
- Ofsted inspections in 2022-2023
- The Coventry Education Partnership
- The Coventry Education Improvement 2023-24 key priorities

The Board questioned Officers and the representative and received responses on a number of matters relating to the Coventry Education Performance 2023 including:

- Strategies schools and the local authority have to achieve higher levels of attendance – barriers to those not attending and bullying in schools as an aspect of non-attendance.
- Access to transport and children having to travel further to attend school and the impact this has on attendance – travel training programmes for children who live further away.
- The importance of starting in the Early years to improve fluency in reading – strengthening current strategies to ensure children become fluent readers, using our budget effectively, adopting a data approach to recognise any gaps in children's learning with a specific focus on those considered disadvantaged, and utilising our join up approach to incorporate strategies such as Birth to 5 to give children and parents the resources they need.
- Early years learning and literacy in the age of the internet and the impact use of electronic devices is having on reading skills.
- The opportunities and threats posed by the increased use of electronic devices.
- The current availability of written materials in an environment of budget cuts.

- Audio and IT resources helping children and parents whose first language is not English.
- Links between exclusion data and SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) children – increased numbers of SEND children in mainstream schools, workforce and exclusion strategies including a new tiered model, potential exclusion patterns for specific cohorts, and the difference between managed (6 weeks) and supportive (12 weeks) moves.
- Key stage 2 attainment increasing but progress decreasing and the data patterns to explain this anomaly.
- The pressure created by the increase in children coming into the system and where from.
- The increase in children accessing free school meals and ensuring everyone who qualifies gets one, as well as the number of families who are struggling but don't meet the threshold for financial support.
- Changes to the Ofsted rating scheme and the current consultation underway to discuss the new framework.

The Board gave their thanks to officers and the representative of the Coventry Primary Partnership for attending the meeting and for sharing Coventry's annual education performance and proposed next steps.

RESOLVED that the Board:

1) Identifies the following areas for further scrutiny and adds them to the Work Programme for the April meeting of the Board:

- **SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) and Early Years Provision**
- **One Strategic Plan – School Place Sufficiency**

31. Work Programme and Outstanding Issues

The Board noted the Work Programme with the inclusion of the items identified in Minute 30.

32. Any Other Business

There were no other items of business.

(Meeting closed at 12.30 pm)



Coventry City Council

Briefing note

To: Education and Children's Scrutiny Board (2)

Date: Thursday, 18th April 2024. 10:00am

Subject: School Admissions and School Sufficiency

1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To update the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) on the current process and position in relation to School Admissions and Sufficiency, and to outline actions in place to respond to sufficiency challenges.

2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:
 - 1) Note the current sufficiency challenges in relation to school place planning.
 - 2) Note the steps being undertaken to sustaining availability of places.
 - 3) Identify any recommendations for the appropriate Cabinet Member.

3 Background and Information

- 3.1 Under Section 14 of the Education Act 1996, Coventry City Council has a statutory duty to ensure sufficient school places and fair, appropriate access to education. It is the Council's role to plan, commission and organise school places in a way that raises standards, manages supply and demand.
- 3.2 The Coventry One Strategic Plan, first presented to Council on 2nd October 2018, and annually thereafter, with the most recent report on the 13th of February 2024, sets out the city pupil forecasts for special, primary, and secondary, broken down across planning areas. It outlines the capital funding strategy proposed by the Local Authority and the Coventry Education Partnership to respond to rising or falling pupil cohorts across the City and provide additional school places required between 2023-2027.
- 3.3 School places within the city are allocated by the City Council's School Admissions team. The Local Authority (LA) has the following statutory duties in relation to School Admissions:
 - to determine and administer the admission arrangements for community schools.
 - to determine an annual co-ordinated scheme for reception and transfers for all schools and academies in the city.
 - to co-ordinate the annual admissions process for reception and transfers (normal intake year) including receipt of every application, exchange of

information with other admission authorities including other LAs, resulting in the communication of a single offer of a school place to a parent.

- the LA's co-ordination responsibility begins from the launch of the application process in September (including compilation and statutory publication of an annual prospectus) until the end of the summer term before admission to school, therefore includes communication of any subsequent offers from waiting lists.
- to advise parents about applying for schools in-year, to provide parents with information about which schools have places, and to provide a common application form.
- To work alongside the Fair Access Protocol team to ensure that vulnerable children, and those who are having difficulty in securing a school place in-year, are allocated a school place as quickly as possible, minimising the time the child is out of school.
- We also have a duty to ensure that every child is receiving a suitable full-time education so monitor the outcome of every application.

3.4 Admissions officers receive all applications from Coventry residents applying for a school place. They handle the intake, processing, evaluation, and determinations of submitted applications. They verify the accuracy of information and confirm that application packages are complete and contain all details relevant to the application – Baptism certificates, details on any siblings already at the preference school. They ensure adherence to all regulations and department policies, with specific reference to the school admission code.

3.5 The City Council receive applications through two different processes – these are the co-ordinated process and the in-year process.

- Co-ordinated process: for pupils applying for Reception and Year 7 places for schools to transfer between phases of education. Applications for this process are received between 1st September and 31st October (Secondary) and 15th January (Primary). In all around 8000 applications are received per year for this process, this figure has been fairly consistent over the past few years but has slowly increased.
- In-year process: for pupils applying for all other year groups or for newly arrived pupils to the city who are of statutory school age in need of a school place. The City Council administers in-year admissions for all schools in Coventry. Over the past 2/3 years Coventry has experienced significant changes in its in-year pupil demographics. Despite a lower birth cohort moving through primary the total statutory school cohort (i.e. not including sixth form and nursery provision) has increased from 52,095 in Jan 2022 to 53,636 in Jan 2024, as a result of in-year migration from new arrivals to Coventry (from either overseas or other parts of the country).

3.6 There is a robust pupil place planning process in place which uses birth rate, and new housing development information to estimate pupil numbers and plan where school places increase and decrease. Net growth in in-year migration is much harder to estimate and has not needed to be factored in previously – Coventry has traditionally seen a high number of in-year applications, but with an equal amount of migration out of the city. To address this unexpected issue pupil number forecasts have been adapted to include higher levels of in-year migration and the strategy to ensure adequate school place provision across the city is to implement additional classes (temporary and permanent) to create additional learning spaces without overburdening schools or compromising the quality of education.

4 Primary Co-ordination

- 4.1 The birth cohort for September 2024 entry to Primary Schools is 300 pupils lower than the 2023 intake (4309 and 4004 pupils respectively.) Despite this reduction in birth rate the number of pupils being allocated a school place in Reception is broadly similar, because of the increase of in-year applications from pupils relocating from outside of the city. This means limited action is required to change the number of available places for Reception intake. There are several schools which are looking to increase Published Admission Number (PAN) in time for September 2024 and 2025 with the support of the LA.
- 4.2 On National Offer Day (NOD) (16 April 2023) for September 23 admissions 94.2% of 'on-time' applicants received their first preference, with 99% receiving one of their three preferences. This figure is above the national averages of 92.5% and 98.6% respectively. The 1% of parents who were offered a place at a school they did not put down as a preference had largely placed a single preference that the School Admissions team were unable to accommodate as the school was full due to other families requesting the same school and placing higher on the criteria.
- 4.3 When parents apply for a school place via the co-ordinated system the vast majority (89.9%) of applications are made through an online portal. This portal strongly advises parents to name three different schools for consideration with the family's catchment school being one of these preferences. For parents who apply via a paper application, a leaflet is available, at school nurseries Private, Voluntary, and Independent (PVI) Early Years settings, advising parents to also name three preferences.
- 4.4 The birth cohort remains stable for the 2025 – 2027 entry to Primary School and any substantial changes in either increases or decreases to that birth rate for 2028 onwards will be monitored and action taken accordingly.

5 Primary In-Year

- 5.1 In-year admissions / migration has had an impact on the availability of places in all other primary year groups. There is a low number of vacant places across most year groups, with year groups 1 and 3 over PAN at citywide level, and in all other year groups, some schools over PAN. This has a number of impacts:
- There is no guarantee of a school places being available in the immediate area of a home address;
 - The average distance of the school place from home address has increased meaning pupils are having to travel further to get to school;
 - There are increased cases where siblings are being offered different schools as the first preference school may not have spaces in the relevant year groups to accommodate all siblings;
 - An increasing number of parents are refusing to take up the school place they have been offered, resulting in a higher number of children of statutory school age not in school;
 - There are an increasing number of school appeals being submitted as parents' express dissatisfaction with the school places they have been offered.
- 5.2 Below outlines the total increase in the number of applications received by the School Admissions Team for Primary In-Year Applications

Primary School Transfers (Applications received between)	Total Applications made to the School Admissions Team
01/09/2018 - 31/08/2019	1,255
01/09/2019 - 31/08/2020	1,454
01/09/2020 - 31/08/2021	2,243
01/09/2021 - 31/08/2022	3,124
01/09/2022 - 31/08/2023	3,056
01/09/2023 - 02/04/2024	2,097

5.3 The increased number of in-year applications over the past 18 months further emphasizes the surge in demand for primary school places. The consequence of this increased demand is that it has significantly reduced the number of school places available in Coventry primary schools. This reduction in available places indicates that schools are reaching or exceeding their capacity to accommodate students, leading to potential challenges in meeting the educational needs of the local population. Education will continue to monitor the rate of change, particularly inline with wider Government policy on migration.

5.4 The table above is “gross growth” referring specifically to the overall increase in applications within the primary sector of Coventry's education system; Coventry has traditionally seen a high number of leavers meaning that impact on sufficiency has been less pronounced. The “net growth” highlights the strain on available school places and underscores the need for effective planning and management of educational resources to meet the needs of the growing student population. In the 22/23 academic year in-year net growth added the equivalent of 28.9 additional classes into the primary sector. In the current academic year the equivalent of 20.7 additional classes to date.

5.5 To respond to this the Council has adopted the following strategy:

- Working in partnership with schools to introduce bulge (temporary) classes. Temporary expansions are for a single year (e.g. Year 2 increase, and that increase then moves through the school until that cohort reaches Year 6). Seven new classes have been opened at Moat House Primary School (Y2), Frederick Bird Primary School (Y's 1, 2 and 4), and Moseley Primary School (Y's 1,2 and 4). More temporary school expansions will be implemented from September 2024 onwards to manage and assist with the increased temporary demand for school places. This will be flexible and developed in partnership with schools in the city.
- Using the Fair Access Protocol to offer an alternative school place in exceptional circumstances
- Review of the School Refuser process to minimize delays in getting statutory school age children into a school place.

6 Secondary Co-ordination

6.1 Since September 2018, additional capacity has been added in Secondary schools to provide for the larger birth cohorts identified through the pupil forecasts (highest birth cohort currently in Year 7). As agreed at Coventry Education Partnership meetings, the plan has been to deliver and adopt a model of both permanent and temporary expansions to ensure sufficiency of places, viability for schools, and cost efficiency.

6.2 These increases have so far provided the necessary places for Year 7 intake. On National Offer Day (1 March 2024) for September 24 admissions, 81.3% of 'on-time' applicants received their first preference, with 94.6% receiving one of their three

preferences. This is slightly below the national averages for 2023 (the national averages for 2024 will be published in June 2024). The main reason for this being below the national average is due to having a very low number of places available in comparison to places required e.g low surplus places on offer day.

6.3 The increased primary cohorts as a result of net in-year migration are impacting on secondary sufficiency, as larger than forecast Y6 cohorts are applying for Year 7 school place. Paragraph 7.3 describes how this is being managed. If the net in-year growth experienced within the primary school cohort over the last 2/3 years continues at the same rate then we will need additional places at Y7 for co-ordination. If we are not able to deliver this within existing provision then the City Council will need to consider securing land for permanent new provision within Coventry.

7 Secondary In-Year

7.1 The Secondary in-year admission numbers have been lower than in Primary. In the 22/23 academic year in-year net growth added the equivalent of 9.3 additional classes into the secondary sector. In the current academic year the equivalent of 6.3 additional classes. The challenge in secondary is that due to the birth rate / population growth there has already been significant expansion, and the level of available surplus is substantially smaller.

7.2 Currently, there is a low number of vacant places in year 7. One school in Year 8 has available places and this is due to the creation of a bulge class within that year group. Year 9, however, is the tightest year group for places, where most schools are significantly over their PAN. When this year group moves through to year 10 some additional places will be added through WMG, which only offers places in Years 10 and 11.

Secondary School Transfers (Applications received between)	Total Applications made to the school Admissions Team
01/09/2018 - 31/08/2019	1,267
01/09/2019 - 31/08/2020	1,117
01/09/2020 - 31/08/2021	1,399
01/09/2021 - 31/08/2022	1,794
01/09/2022 - 31/08/2023	1,849
01/09/2023 - 02/04/2024	1,279

7.3 To respond to this the City Council has adopted the following strategy:

- Working in partnership with schools to re-utilise former bulge (temporary) classes as part of the One Strategic Plan 2018 – 2024.
- Working in partnership with schools to introduce new bulge (temporary) classes. Due to the complexities of adding in a class mid-year at Secondary school and the difficulties in arranging new timetables for specialist subjects there has been limited take up on bulge class discussions with Secondary schools. This is compounded by a number of schools having already expanded to meet birth rate increase, so therefore having less flexibility to expand further.
- The limited success of the in-year bulge classes within secondary schools has highlighted the need to ensure that available spaces are created as part of the co-ordinated scheme, which is simpler for schools to manage logistically, which would give sufficient places to manage both co-ordination and then several years' worth of in-year applications.

8 Sufficiency of Specialist Places for children with an Education Health and Care Plan

- 8.1 The majority of children with an identified special educational need, have their needs met within their local mainstream school through the provision ordinarily available within a schools delegated budget. Children receiving ‘SEN Support’ are placed on the school’s SEN register and their progress is monitored through a ‘plan, do, review’ process as set out in statutory guidance: [SEND Code of Practice January 2015](#) Support arrangements commonly include access to external specialists, including Coventry’s specialist support teaching service and Educational Psychology.
- 8.2 In January 2023, 9,855 children (which represents 15.8% of the school population) were recorded as receiving SEN Support, compared to 13% national (source: SEN2 statutory return). This is the highest percentage of SEND Support across all West Midlands LAs, signalling that Coventry schools are inclusive and that they both identify and respond to children with additional needs.
- 8.3 In addition, a small percentage of children with ‘severe and complex’ special educational needs are referred to the LA for a statutory education, health and care assessment. The outcome of that assessment may lead to an Education Health and Care Plan (EHC Plan). An EHC Plan identifies a child’s difficulties, sets out the support the child needs and determines the school the child should attend to have their needs met. LAs have statutory duty to arrange the provision that is specified and quantified within the plan, including the delivery of a suitable school placement. This duty is needs led and cannot be legally constrained because of budget pressures.
- 8.4 Broadly 33% of children with an EHC Plan are placed in mainstream schools, 48% in special schools, 12% in FE and 7% have other arrangements. Circa 20% of the total number of EHC Plans maintained are for young people age 17 to 25.
- 8.5 However, year on year demand for EHC Plans has increased placing pressure on the specialist system. Since the introduction of the Children and Families Act which was enacted in September 2015, demand for EHC Plans has grown both nationally and locally as illustrated below:

Number of EHCPs maintained by Coventry LA									
Year (Jan)	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
No. of EHCPs	1559	1724	1861	2084	2145	2344	2572	2708	3091
Cumulative % increase	-	10.5%	19.3%	33.6%	37.5%	50.3%	65%	73.7%	98.3%

- 8.6 More significantly, it is evident both locally and nationally that in-year demand for new EHC Plans has increased significantly post pandemic. This appears to be because of an increase in Coventry’s pre-school and school age population and a disproportionate increase in the number of children presenting with severe and complex needs as illustrated below:

Number of new EHCPs issued by Coventry annually									
Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
New EHCPs Issued	176	209	313	271	272	382	354	367	562
Cumulative % increase	-	18.8%	22.2%	54%	54.5%	117%	101%	109%	219%

- 8.7 Consequently, demand for special school placements has increased exponentially thereby exceeding forecasts based on birth rates. This reflects the national picture. There are a range of hypothetical explanations to explain the national growth, but little evidenced research has been undertaken.
- 8.8 In order to ensure that Coventry has done all that it can to ensure that children 'receive the right support, in the right place at the right time' reflecting the Government's strategic direction of travel to secure a sustainable SEN system. Steps taken include:
- Development of a workforce strategy to increase the skills, confidence and capacity of mainstream schools to meet an increasing level of additional needs;
 - A programme to establish enhanced resource provisions (ERPs) initially across Coventry's primary schools estate. Two were opened during the last academic year at Alderman's Green and Whittle Academy creating an additional twenty places, two more are planned to open in autumn 2024, with provision for a further one during the academic year;
 - In-year commissioning expansion of current in-City special schools to a level of maximum capacity;
 - The Woodlands development programme to re-site Woodfield Special School (an all-age special school for children experiencing significant social, emotional and mental health challenges including those associated with autism) will deliver up to 100 additional placements;
 - The potential expansion through capital investment of the current broad spectrum special school estate to create additional secondary capacity;
 - Utilisation of the independent non-maintained sector as an interim solution to secure the Council's statutory duty.

9 Funding

- 9.1 The capital programme for Education covers £126m of expenditure on school sites since 2017. Through this programme of work over 3000 new school places have, or are planned to, be added, at mainstream and SEN Schools. Of these 3000, just over 500 have been at special schools or schools that offer specialist provision in the form of Enhanced Resource Provision in a mainstream school. With projects of this nature accounting for c.30% of the total £126 million of capital funding utilised on school sites.
- 9.2 The revenue Growth Fund is a portion of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block which enables LAs to support schools with significant in-year pupil growth which is not otherwise immediately recognised by the lagged funding system. Since 2019/20 the Growth Fund has been allocated to LAs on a formulaic basis. This means that the level of growth funding Coventry receives is directly linked to the increased number of pupils in the city on school census day versus the previous year. It also means that Coventry's allocation of DSG for growth fluctuates annually. For the schools which have agreed to take a bulge class they will be allocated funding from the growth fund as funding will not be available through the National Funding Formula budget shares immediately.
- 9.3 The funding available is calculated on the basis of the full cost of a Teacher, a Teaching Assistant (including on-costs) plus 25% for overheads being paid for every available place in a bulge class. These values will be paid pro-rata where a bulge class starts after April. For example. If a school opens a 30-place bulge class in April 2024, they would receive £105K.

- 9.4 The High Needs Block of the DSG continues to be an area of pressure. National SEND spending has increased significantly in recent years with many authorities across the country now reporting DSG deficits. The main factors underlying this position stem from the consequences of reform including the expanded offer, rising demand and shortage of specialist provision creating an increased reliance on the independent sector. Ordinarily, authorities would be responsible for meeting any deficit position from other council funding, but currently due to the significance of the issues in this area the Treasury have enacted a national statutory override ringfencing the DSG position away from LAs until March 2026. Coventry currently has a DSG surplus but in-line with national trends it is continuing to experience growth in the overall number of young people with EHC Plans. This will increase pressure on its High Needs Block budget and those SEND services funded via Core budget. In Coventry, High Needs Block funding allocations have increased significantly since 2019/20, however the DfE have forecast more modest funding increases moving forwards. It is therefore key that the Council monitors the position and manages resources effectively to ensure that it remains within funding allocations as far as is possible.
- 9.5 As a result of the challenges outline above there are significant capacity issues across a number of teams in Education including SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), Capital, Admissions, Appeals, and Attendance and Children Missing Education (CME). There has also been an increase in the level of parental queries and complaints which impact on this capacity further. This has in some cases also been compounded by changes in legislation and policy (Attendance).
- 9.6 The majority of these teams are funded from high needs and central DSG although there is also core funding within SEND. There is no additional funding within central DSG to reflect this increase in capacity, and in fact as a LA on the funding floor, there are reductions in central DSG funding.

10 Next Steps

- 10.1 Moving forward, further collaboration with schools to create new school places is essential for addressing the growing demand for quality education. With this partnership approach with schools, we can identify areas with the greatest need and develop strategic plans for establishing new schools or expanding existing ones.
- 10.2 The Department for Education (DfE) have outlined the expectation that schools increase their PAN when there is a requirement for additional places if they have previously reduced PAN and have the built capacity. Education is in discussion with these schools, and they will continue to be explored as a preferred option.
- 10.3 Due to existing pressures, the Council will work innovatively to address the pressing need for additional places. Leveraging modular construction techniques, and adaptive scheduling systems allows us to maximize existing resources and adapt quickly to changing demands.
- 10.4 The Council will continue to identify the amount of school places needing to be added each year, and then work within the growth fund allocations to identify schools which may be able to accommodate bulge classes.

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Agenda Item 5

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2023-24

Last updated 10th April 2024

Please see page 2 onwards for background to items

6th July 2023
Service Overview and Priorities Apprenticeship Provision
5th October 2023
Attendance Behaviour and Exclusions Duties Ofsted Inspection Framework – including SEND
23rd November 2023
Social Worker recruitment and retention Cost of Children's Placements
21st December 2023
Holiday Activity Fund - Update Family Valued Programme – including Reunification Project
1st February 2024
School Performance Data
14th March 2024 – joint with Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5)
Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report CAMHS
18 April 2024
One Strategic Plan - School Place Sufficiency
Items for 2024-25
Early Years Strategy (first meeting) Children's Service Complaints and Service Improvement Family Health and Lifestyles Service – health inequalities Youth Provision in Coventry Cost of Children's Placements (Update Report) Health and Wellbeing in Schools – joint with SB5
Items taken for information
Adoption Service Annual Reports Fostering Annual Report

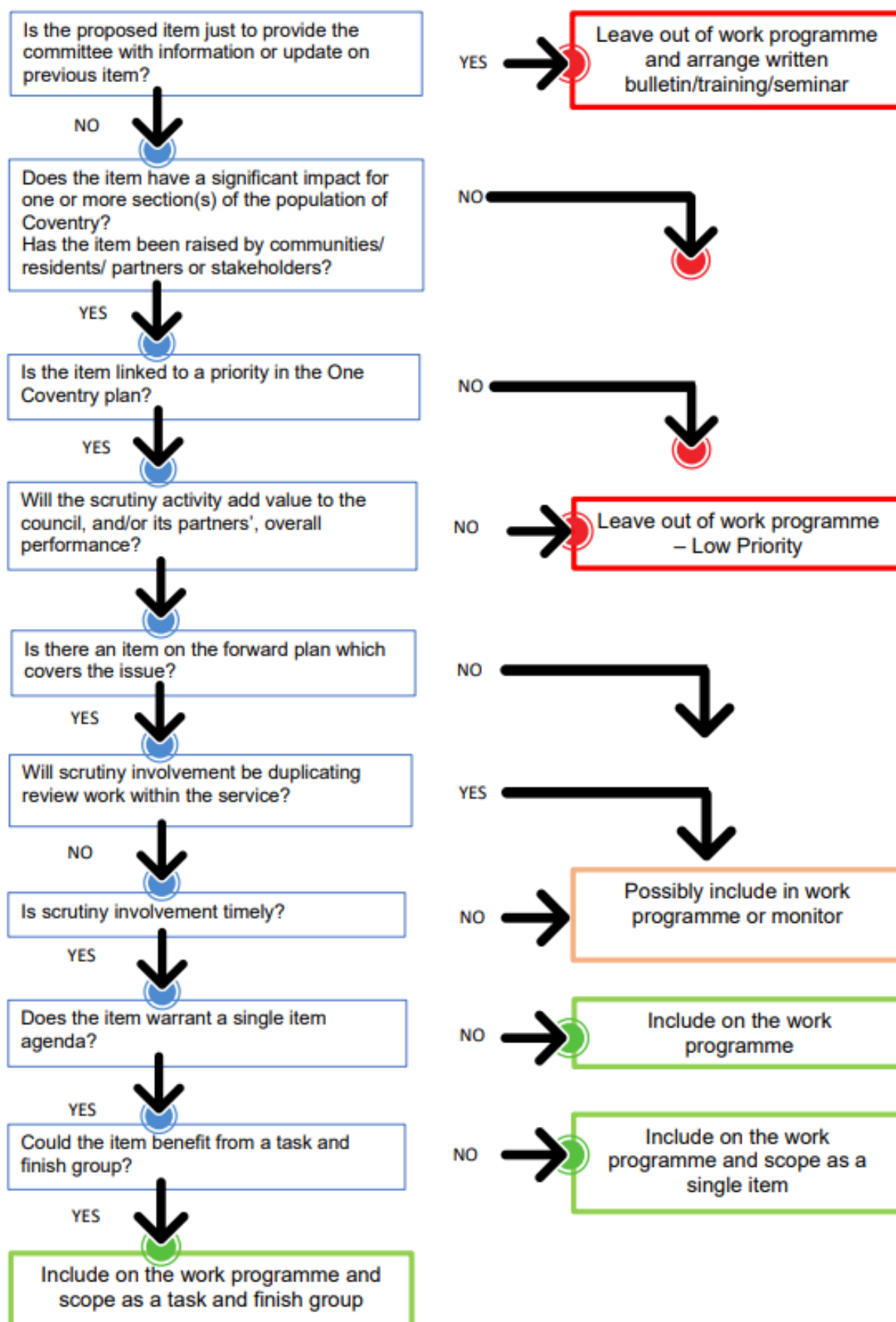
Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2023-24

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
6th July 2023	Service Overview and Priorities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • Children's Services 	An opportunity for the Board to be briefed on the service areas under the scrutiny board portfolio	Neil Macdonald/Kirston Nelson Cllr Sandhu Cllr Seaman
	Apprenticeship Provision	An item referred from Scruco to consider the range and quality of FE provision across the city, including apprenticeships but to also include work-based learning in schools, as well as opportunities for SEND pupils	Kirston Nelson Cllr Sandhu
5th October 2023	Attendance Behaviour and Exclusions Duties	To consider the implementation of the new duties around attendance, Behaviour and Exclusions	Kirston Nelson Cllr Sandhu
	Ofsted Inspection Framework – including SEND		
23rd November 2023	Social Worker recruitment and retention		Neil Macdonald Cllr Seaman
	Cost of Children's Placements	Referred from Scruco to consider the financial pressures caused by the high cost of children's placements	Neil Macdonald Cllr Seaman
21st December 2023	Holiday Activity Fund - Update	Members requested a further update on the HAF following the last item.	Cllr Sandhu Rachael Sugars
	Family Valued Programme – including Reunification Project	To consider progress and impact on families of the programme, including the Reunification Project	Neil Macdonald Cllr Seaman
1st February 2024	School Performance Data	An annual report on school performance, to include school attendance, exclusions and suspensions data, as well as post 16 performance	Cllr Sandhu Kirston Nelson
14th March 2024 – joint with Health and Social Care Scrutiny Board (5)	Coventry Safeguarding Children's Partnership Annual Report	To include picking up the actions requested by the Board – widening work with faith groups, EDI strategy and work with children and young people	Rebekah Eaves Cllr Seaman Neil Macdonald

Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) Work Programme 2023-24

Date	Title	Detail	Cabinet Member/ Lead Officer
	CAMHS		
18 April 2024	One Strategic Plan - School Place Sufficiency	To look at the pressures on school places across the city and what the Council is doing to support sufficient places, specifically special school places	Kirston Nelson Cllr Sandhu
Items for 2024-25	Early Years Strategy (first meeting)	Following a report on the Early Years Strategy, Members requested a further item including progress on and more detail on the Saplings Programme, as well as strategies to support reading in the early years. To invite Chair of SB5	Rachael Sugars Cllr Sandhu
	Children's Service Complaints and Service Improvement	To consider how children's services complaints are used to improve services	Neil Macdonald Cllr Seaman
	Family Health and Lifestyles Service – health inequalities	To looking in more detail at how the service is tackling health inequalities and targeting services at those in need on a localised basis.	Harbir Nagra Cllr Caan
	Youth Provision in Coventry	How and where we work with outside partners (and specifically the third sector) to deliver it	Neil Macdonald Cllr Seaman
	Cost of Children's Placements (Update Report)	At their meeting on 23 rd November 2023, Member requested an update item to report on progress in addressing the cost of placements	Neil Macdonald Cllr Seaman
	Health and Wellbeing in Schools – joint with SB5	To look at what is being done to promote health and well-being in schools and universities – including the school nursing service	
	Task and Finish Group – Autism in Schools	Following a T&F group led by SB5, it was agreed that SB2 would undertake a T&F on the in-depth challenges facing schools in providing support to children, young people and their families who are on the autism assessment pathway.	Jeannette Essex Cllr Sandhu
Items taken for information	Adoption Service Annual Reports	Annual report – including information about the diversity of the adoption panel and adopters as well as support to birth mothers after their children have been adopted	Cllr Seaman
	Fostering Annual Report	For Members to consider whether a full item is required	Cllr Seaman

Work Programme Decision Flow Chart



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