

Council Meeting

17 March, 2015

Booklet 1

Answers to Written Questions

1.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Skinner

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor A Khan

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“Can he please make a further written statement on the possibility of maintaining a 50 metre swimming pool in Coventry.

The matter remains of great interest to residents throughout the City, and we need to keep them constantly informed”.

ANSWER:

“On 9 September 2014, Coventry City Council approved investment of £36.7m in a city centre destination sports and leisure facility (including waterpark and 25m swimming pool). The Council further agreed to work with the City of Coventry Swimming Club and other partners to explore the feasibility of keeping a 50m pool within the city, if it could be technically possible and deliverable within the available financial resource.

The Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), as National Governing Body for swimming, was invited to, and agreed to, lead this further feasibility work. As reported at the January 2015 meeting of Council, four initial scoping meetings were held with the ASA and Coventry City Council officers. As requested, Council officers provided a range of technical and financial baseline information and supported the ASA and Sport England with facilities planning modelling for swimming pools. The ASA have additionally met with wider stakeholders such as the City of Coventry Swimming Club.

In February 2015, the Council and ASA released a joint statement. This statement confirmed that the ASA has concluded that any potential option involving the refurbishment of Coventry Sports and Leisure Centre in Fairfax Street is not worthy of pursuing, as the facility will not be able to meet the technical requirements for competition for the sport without extensive and prohibitively expensive remodelling. A city centre location for a 50m pool is therefore not now being considered by the ASA, as no suitable site has been identified as available and a new leisure water facility is already planned for the city centre. A stand-alone city centre 50m pool would also entail incremental construction costs so would not be an economically viable solution for the city.

Work is still ongoing to continue to explore and model other options which could, potentially, more effectively provide a 50m competition facility to serve Coventry and the wider region. The Council is continuing to support the ASA with this feasibility work, and the ASA will provide a report to the Council on its findings when its strategic and financial modelling is concluded. A public statement will be made when this report has been issued to the Council and the above feasibility work concluded.”

2.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Lepoidevin

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Kershaw

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“Can the Cabinet Member confirm that all schools are receiving the Pupil Premium for the pupils in their schools that are entitled to claim this funding?”

ANSWER:

“Yes all schools maintained by the Local Authority are receiving Pupil Premium for the pupils in their schools that are eligible for this funding. Academies receive their pupil premium funding directly from the Education Funding Agency (except for any pupils who are looked after which comes through the Local Authority).

The allocation to each school is exactly as per the Department for Education guidance, which allows the virtual headteacher through the Looked After Children Education Service (LACES) to retain pupil premium funding for Looked After Children (LAC). In Coventry the virtual headteacher retains £400 per LAC to be spent on these pupils centrally, and then passes on £500 per term per LAC based on the production of a good personal education plan.”

3.

QUESTION SUBMITTED BY: Councillor Lepoidevin

TO BE ANSWERED BY: Councillor Ruane

TEXT OF QUESTION:

“Can the Cabinet Member confirm that all the additional 15 hour free nursery place provision that the government introduced for vulnerable families has now been taken up?”

ANSWER:

“The programme was initially targeted at the 20% of most vulnerable 2 year olds which equated to 1255 (based on DWP data), 2 year olds to access 15 hours a week funded early education. The take up rate achieved was over 90% against this target in July 2014.

In September 2014 the programme was expanded to reach a further 20% of 2 year olds (in total 40% of all 2 year olds would now be eligible). The data received from DWP shows that 2267 children are eligible under this criteria. The latest headcount data (January 2015) shows that 1487 children are currently accessing their entitlement which equates to 65% of those who are eligible. Over time as the programme has been developed, steady progress

towards meeting targets has been made, but it is acknowledged that there is still a great deal of work to do in order to achieve this target and to further embed this entitlement as part of Coventry's Early Help Offer for our most vulnerable families.

It also has to be recognised that the take up of entitlement is not statutory and therefore reliant on parental choice. Analysis is being undertaken of the reasons parents are identifying for non-take up so that this can be used to inform future marketing activity.

Whilst knowledge of the programme amongst professionals is high and is steadily translating into increased take up rates, activities to maintain awareness amongst parents whose children could be eligible has to be on-going to ensure that newly eligible families know about their entitlement and are confident in how to access a funded place for their child.

The marketing and raising awareness work has been funded through Trajectory funding which ends March 2015, however Schools Forum have agreed for the reserves to be carried forward for another year to further embed this work during 2015/16.

Officers continue to promote the programme through a robust marketing campaign and working with partners to raise awareness in addition to activities to engage with all families including those known to be most at risk of not taking up their entitlement. Work with the Childcare sector which includes the allocation of capital and revenue funding continues to be a focus in order to create sufficient places to meet projected demand.

The marketing campaign has included information placed inside buses, on till roll receipts and road shows have been held in shopping centres. Posters and other printed material have been distributed to GP surgeries, libraries and other public buildings. The programme is advertised widely and now appears on road traffic islands and on the screen in Millennium Place. Attendance at local and citywide events have provided other promotional opportunities. This is in addition to a national marketing campaign

In recognition that there are many community languages spoken in the city, promotional materials have been translated into 12 languages and outreach work by children centres has been done in partnership with interpreters.

Links with the Health Visiting service are well established, with CWPT mailing out to all families with a child between 18 months to 2 years old, providing information on the eligibility criteria and how they can access a free place. Social media is being effectively used via Facebook, the Council website and the Family Information Service, with a high number of hits and enquiries recorded.

Outreach work has been undertaken by children centres and is planned to take place on a termly basis using the data provided by DWP to target families and to provide information which should lead to increased participation. This outreach work will be maximised to not only secure participation and take up of Early Learning for 2 Year Olds but also to promote the benefits of early learning and its impact on 'school readiness,' provide information on children centre services including access to parenting interventions, the Acting Early Programme and also signposting to the Family Information Service."