

# Crawley Borough Council

## Minutes of Social Mobility Scrutiny Panel

Tuesday, 11 September 2018 at 6.00 pm

### Councillors Present:

K Sudan (Chair)

M L Ayling, I T Irvine and K L Jaggard

### Also in Attendance:

Councillor R D Burrett - WSCC

Mark Jenner, Head of School Effectiveness - WSCC

### Officers Present:

Ian Duke Deputy Chief Executive

Heather Girling Democratic Services Officer

### Apologies for Absence:

Councillor T G Belben, R S Fiveash and L Vitler

### 1. Disclosures of Interest & Whipping Declarations

No disclosures or whipping declarations were made.

### 2. Minutes

The minutes of the Social Mobility Scrutiny Panel held on 23 July 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### 3. Witness Sessions

The Chair provided some background information on the Panel and then witnesses were asked to offer views on education, skills and associated employment in West Sussex and to understand the challenges the services face – now and in the future, together with the provision of initiatives and support currently being provided.

Councillor Richard Burrett (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) and Mark Jenner (Head of School Effectiveness) from West Sussex County Council updated the Panel that:

- A new curriculum was introduced in 2014 and initially not all schools were prepared for the changes. However there have since been amendments in teaching styles and skills, principally in reading, writing and maths leading to a noticeable difference in performance, particularly in reading.

- The draft school effectiveness strategy had been out for consultation to be approved by the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills.
- There was an ambition to achieve more for Crawley schools. The aspiration was that by 2022, West Sussex will be one of the top 25% of local authorities nationally for the quality and provision of learning across all age groups and abilities.
- In terms of the proportion of children eligible for free school meals attending a good or outstanding schools (state funded secondary), Crawley was just one school away from its 100% target.
- The data for Crawley KS2 disadvantaged pupils shows improvement over 3 years (2016-2018), a distinct narrowing in the national gap figures over the years (29.5, 25.3, 17.9).
- KS4 figures were currently outstanding as GCSE data was currently being prepared but can be provided to the Panel later in the year.

During the discussion the following views were expressed:

- It was acknowledged there were no formal mechanisms for monitoring or working with academies. It was noted there were differences in the relationship with academies, as there was with performance, as too with LEA schools. However any issues can be raised with the regional schools commissioner.
- Some schools receiving lower Ofsted ratings were required to become academies. It was important to observe the reason for the transition and acknowledge that some schools had taken the decision themselves.
- There was recognition that schools were improving. They need confidence to achieve a good rating, then maintain this rating and improve further to outstanding. All schools have an aspiration to be good or better.
- With regards to parental preference or choice, it was thought there may be a need to alert parents as to all the options for each school.
- There was recognition that schools try hard to publicise free school meals as this benefits both pupils and schools. Schools receive additional funding from the government for each child registered for free school meals.
- In terms of exclusion data, it was confirmed that West Sussex data was proportionate with the national data. Maintaining children in education was key and it was questioned if resources could be involved at an earlier stage. It was acknowledged that it was a myth that high level exclusion rates resulted in low Ofsted ratings. It was commented that the alternative provision service worked well but there was disappointment that it did not continue past the age of 16.
- It was requested that data be provided in terms of gender and KS4 in general. This would be provided once available.

The Springboard Project had also been invited as one of the providers for disabled children, young people and families in the area to provide information on the current challenges, together with possible solutions. Unfortunately the witness no longer worked at the organisation, however the Springboard Project was still keen to be informed and further consideration would be given as to their involvement.

#### **RESOLVED**

That Panel Members thanked all witnesses for their attendance. Councillor Burrett also thanked the Scrutiny Panel for having the opportunity for being able to contribute.

#### **4. General Update and Actions for the Next Meeting**

The Chair updated Panel Members on work that had been recently been undertaken:

- Head Teachers had been consulted upon with regards to seeking views on the Draft School Effectiveness Strategy 2018-2022, although responses had been low.
- Information on apprenticeships within the council had been circulated to Panel Members following the last meeting.

Following the comprehensive witness sessions and following actions points, it was agreed that it was necessary to obtain further evidence as documented and discussed. To include:

1. That the Chair consult the appendices attached to the Draft School Effectiveness Strategy regarding the consultation and school comments.
2. That the Chair contact WSCC to obtain data in relation to gender, KS4, progress 8, use of English as additional language and career advice.
3. It was queried whether further information could be obtained regarding the Social Mobility Foundation in relation to the council potentially becoming a member.

## **5. Recommendations**

Following the comprehensive witness sessions and following actions points, it was agreed:

### **RESOLVED**

1. That further promotion should take place with regards to free school meals as this benefits both pupils and schools. Schools receive additional funding from the government for each child registered for free school meals.
2. That the Council investigate becoming a Social Mobility Employer through the Social Mobility Foundation.
3. That the Council request WSCC to further consider that the Alternative Provision service continues past the age of 16.
4. That the Council request WSCC to further consider that the Access and Exclusion Team resources could be involved at an earlier stage.

### **Closure of Meeting**

With the business of the Social Mobility Scrutiny Panel concluded, the Chair declared the meeting closed at 8.08pm.

**K Sudan  
(Chair)**