
**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP
AND PARTNERSHIPS COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 3 OCTOBER 2016 AT 7.35 P.M. IN THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
COUNCIL OFFICES, WEELEY**

Present: Councillors Fairley (Chairman), Baker (Vice-Chairman), Amos, Davis, I J Henderson, King, Land, Newton, Parsons and Yallop

Also Present: Councillors Hughes (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services), McWilliams (Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Health & Wellbeing) and Bucke

In Attendance: Head of People, Performance & Projects (Anastasia Simpson), Executive Projects Manager (Rebecca Morton) and Committee Services Officer (Janey Nice)

Also in Attendance: Graham Lancaster (Essex County Council's Lead Commissioner for Primary Schools (North East))

14. CHAIR

As the Chairman of the Committee (Councillor Fairley) was delayed due to a road accident, the Chair was occupied by the Vice-Chairman (Councillor Baker) for items 15, 16, 17 and 18 part).

15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND SUBSTITUTIONS

Apologies were received from Councillor Raby (with Councillor Davis substituting) and also from Councillor Poonian (with no substitute).

16. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee, held on 11 July 2016, were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Declarations were made by Councillor K T King (as his wife was employed as a teacher) and Councillor I J Henderson (as he was a Member of Essex County Council).

18. WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP TO SUPPORT THE RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION OF TEACHERS

During the consideration of this item the Chairman arrived and occupied the Chair.

Mr Lancaster informed the Committee that he had been previously employed as a teacher and was now employed by Essex County Council (ECC) as the Lead Commissioner for Primary Schools (North East).

Mr Lancaster said he had attended the Council's Locality Board meeting held on Thursday 29 September 2016 and said that the Tendring District had a great cause for celebration in respect of its School Ofsted reports. He reported that Ofsted had reported Tendring Secondary Schools as being 100%, good or outstanding. This was unheard of in Essex previously and also 80% of Primary Schools were now good or outstanding. He said that several other Primary Schools were due to be examined in the near future, which he believed, would bring the figure up to 90% which would be an enormous improvement. He added that those figures were closing in on the national figures. Mr Lancaster further said

that in terms of the gap with disadvantaged pupils, Tendring was doing better than the whole of Essex.

Mr Lancaster informed the Committee that there were a number of challenges that schools were facing which included recruitment and retention of teachers and also school readiness for pupils at the age of 4 who could have differing problems ranging from being unable to speak, not toilet trained and with very low development skills. He added that there was an enormous amount of work to make children ready to enter schools' reception classes and parents needed to help get their children ready for school.

He said there was an enormous challenge for school places, especially with Colchester being the fastest growing town in the country and there was also an immense pressure for school places in Tendring. He explained that there was a great deal of communication currently going on between school placement departments and Headteachers, along with school class numbers, the expansion of schools or even the building of new ones. He added that there was a 10-year tracking of numbers of pupils in schools in the county.

With regard to recruitment and retention of teachers Mr Lancaster said that he Chaired groups of Headteachers Associations and had a workforce team who advertised teacher vacancies. He added that this was a national problem, with the Eastern Region being a particular problem, with it being an even worse problem in Essex and the Coastal area being even worse still, along with the area around the M25.

Mr Lancaster said there were two reasons why schools in Tendring were attaining better results, the first being the quality of leadership whereby that in 40 schools only 5 or 6 of them had the same Headteacher currently since he had got involved around 4 or 5 years ago. He said that a new Headteacher would give real passion to the role and real belief that Tendring pupils could attain good results as elsewhere. Secondly, he said, Headteachers expected teachers to be effective in the classroom. If teaching vacancies could not be filled, improvements would be lost and he said that standards must be retained.

He gave an example of two schools where Headteachers had vacancies and because of that, were actually taking classes to help fill the gaps which meant they could not effectively lead their schools. He said the reasons for so many vacancies for teachers were that not enough new teachers were coming through the system, some when interviewed were not of good enough quality to teach and he asked the question, what could be done to resolve the problem?

Mr Lancaster said there were a number of initiatives being considered from free teacher training for highly skilled teaching assistants to try and see if teaching could be a further for them and said that efforts were being made to encourage teachers who had left the profession to return to teaching, and if out of the classroom for some time, offer suitable retraining courses.

Mr Lancaster said there were no teacher training courses available at any Essex Universities only by independent companies. He said that this made it more difficult to attract teachers to Essex. He said that last year the Department of Education imposed a national cap for the number of teacher training places, but this was not based on geographical locations, but only for numbers for primary schools, secondary schools and certain subjects. He said that the national cap had hit providers very hard and that his department was lobbying on behalf of the East of England and that for 2017/18 only 75% of places had been bid for.

A Member asked why the cap had been imposed and Mr Lancaster said that the majority could need bursaries or grants or loans and that more places could be funded, again the cap was not taking geographical requirements into consideration.

When asked by another Member if there was any possibility for bursaries, loans and grants being more localised than from national Government, Mr Lancaster said he was not aware of

any discussions on that, but thought it would be a good idea. The Member added it would lead to more control over training. Mr Lancaster said that there was a scheme called 'Teach First' which was a pilot for targeting areas of deprivation and Colchester would start this off with its Council taking part in 2017. The scheme, he said, would mean that trainees would have to agree to teach in a school in the area where trained for a year. He added that research had shown that most new teachers tended to move on after one year.

He also looked at the retention of teachers, why do some leave? Why do some take early retirement? He said that some were lost to the profession only two or three years after being trained. Mr Lancaster said he had researched all of Essex schools and had spoken to Headteachers of the levels of teacher turnover and what they did to retain their teachers and he would shortly be sending out a 'toolkit' which had been written by Headteachers for Headteachers of which he had collated the information provided. He said the toolkit would give suggestions which Headteachers could employ. , They could also set up a local network for newly qualified teachers to meet up where they could discuss the issues where they were feeling pressure and other matters.

Mr Lancaster said he found that Headteachers could offset the pressures the Ofsted inspections could cause and they could look at the most efficient ways of responding and try and remove the pressures off teachers in the particularly difficult Years of 2 and 6. . He said that teachers claimed that they always seemed to be marking work, planning school work and seemed to have no life outside of school, even though they had the opportunities of long school holidays. He said it had been commented that some would rather earn less and have such no work pressures. He added that this was a national problem of offsetting the problems of Ofsted inspections.

He said it was a big problem of getting across how nice an area Essex was to live and work in and indicated on a recruitment site which gave positive answers along with a video of how attractive a place Essex was. He commented that the Department had tried recruiting from overseas, including from Australia and Ireland, which had an excess of teachers. He said one problem was that slick recruitment agencies attracted teachers by offering incentives then passed finder's fees onto the school, possibly in the region of £5,000 to £6,000 per teacher so there was no hope of competing with those agencies. He added he had been in negotiation with three possible overseas recruitment agencies to enter into a partnership where they could identify vacancies in Essex school by school and would recruit for his Department for a fee which would be rather smaller than the fees charged by other agencies.

Mr Lancaster said that on the issue of housing for teachers there were three different scenarios that could happen, one was where empty Essex buildings could be converted into flats, there was one in Witham currently being used as a children's centre which was due to close at Christmas and could be converted. He said he had received permission from an investment board recently to make a business case for its conversion into flats with the rent income going to ECC with subsidised rents for teachers in the Witham area.

He said the second was in large scale building developments where possible housing units could be allocated for key staff and he mentioned Jaywick and a site in Braintree.

Mr Lancaster said the third initiative could come from the significant redevelopment of school sites, Alderman Blaxhill school in Colchester was due to be demolished and flats for teachers could be built on that site. He mentioned that there was a need also for homes for other key workers which would include social workers, nurses, plus housing for adults with learning difficulties.

A Member asking about recruitment, asked for an explanation of what training was needed and where advertising was being undertaken. Mr Lancaster said that he had received funding for five recruitment fairs for people interested in teacher training at different locations in the country, with advertising in various local newspapers. Another initiative he said, was tracking secondary school pupils, seeking to identify sixth formers who might be interested in

training as a teacher in the future. This was a longer term project and part of training, living and working in Essex.

Mr Lancaster was asked by a Member if there were different scales of pay in different areas and about some of the agency involvement. He responded by saying that in the Essex area recruitment in IT was a problem and even worse than that, Mathematics, English and History and there was not enough trainees attracted to those subject areas. He said it was hypothetical that schools could get into a bidding war with other schools and gave an example of Tendring Technology College, based in Frinton-on-sea and Thorpe-le-Soken, bidding against Clacton County High. He said it could be a possibility that presently teachers could be placed as a Head of a Department in a school with only three or four years teaching experience as against taking seven to eight years to previously reach a Head of Department post. Mr Lancaster said that schools had a free range in pay which had helped towards retention of teachers.

He said that in Primary Schools, the Juniors were often one Ofsted grade lower than other areas, generally down to higher pressure of work to keep up standards and they tended to struggle to recruit teachers. He added that Roman Catholic schools also struggled to recruit suitable teachers, this being from a very small pool of available teachers.

A Member asked why there was a lack of Universities in the Essex area offering teacher training courses. Mr Lancaster said it was a case of once bitten, twice shy, some courses had been really poor so they had been forced to close the training courses. He added that Universities had to be on a very sure footing. However, he commented, that there had been ongoing discussions between Secondary School Headteachers and Universities to see what options there could be for opening up teacher training courses, but those would have to be of the right quality.

The Chairman asked about the possibility of schools working together and Mr Lancaster said that this was very difficult, but that Primary Schools could work in clusters especially in areas such as educational needs where such teachers were mainly part-time so possibly three or four schools could perhaps share an educational needs teacher. He added that this could be more difficult in Secondary Schools and more collaboration was needed between them. He said that Secondary Schools tended to be quite competitive in who or what they were prepared to share as those schools tended to be judged by outcomes. He added that this would not be much of an issue if the Secondary School was full, but if not full, exam results could be a real issue.

A Member asked Mr Lancaster what was his view on the idea of selection of pupils in schools and Mr Lancaster commented that was an interesting subject and that at a recent briefing on the new green paper issued by Central Government, the Local Authority position was very much for exploring the extension of grammar schools. He said that grammar schools gave more advantages for children to thrive in a more academic institution, however if it was a case of creaming off the top percentile of pupils it would cause a great problem. He said that he was a fan of the Finnish school system where they had selection at the age of 12 then another opportunity at the age of 15, this would give a child another opportunity if they attained better results at a later age. He added that in Finland there was no distinction between grammar schools, or their equivalent, and at the age of 12, the child's aptitude was examined to see which would be the best school for them to be tailored for their needs. He believed that this was where the British schooling went wrong as only 50% of pupils went on to University degree courses.

When a Member asked about lower than average skilled teachers in Essex, Mr Lancaster said that what would be acceptable in one school would not be acceptable in another. He said that not enough was done in tracking teachers to see what, if any, extra training was needed. He then said he had had discussions with supply agencies for daily cover (or longer) and commented that he thought the training they provided was not that great and it

could be a good thing to link their staff to Essex schools to broker better training which would then improve the quality of teachers on their books. He added that he had personally been involved in removing poor teachers, only then to find the same teacher working as a supply teacher in another school.

When asked by a Member about gaps in school places and if a central system would be better which could then be sub-divided by region, and whether this would give a better idea of what was going on and if any new entrants needed extra coaching to help them, Mr Lancaster said that he would like to create one and that his workforce team colleagues go to recruitment fairs to encourage teachers to come to Essex visited recruitment agencies tended to beat them for placements and it was impossible to compete with them, but that they would try. He said that newly qualified teachers had an expectation of support training and he had a branch of his team to help look after them. He said that it was ideal for a new teacher to have a mentor in the school to help look after them by supporting and managing them and having the job of reporting any issues back to a central agency to see what could be done to assist them. He then commented rather than have a new teacher fail it would be better to broker a sidewise move to give a better chance of success.

A Member suggested that if there was a problem of beating the Recruitment Agencies to newly qualified teachers, it might give his Department more scope if they reached the trainees before they became qualified and perhaps other initiatives such as student loans or anything else to get their loyalty while still training. Mr Lancaster said that he was looking at that in terms of recruiting overseas teachers and also looking at travel vouchers as he had over £200,000 to assist in initiatives, however, he pointed out that sum would not go far when covering 600 schools. He was trying to support schools to address problems and suggested that if they pooled resources their "pulling power" might be greater and he was trying to encourage schools to work together.

Career guidance was raised by a Member by asking how close the Department's links were with Career Advisors, perhaps they could steer pupils towards a teaching career in more detail. Mr Lancaster said that this had come up recently with a different twist to look at career choices in a different way, to making the career of teaching at secondary schools more exciting, perhaps pupils could meet up with teachers who were keen to pass on their enthusiasm as there were teachers who were excited about their jobs and he thought this was a good idea worth pursuing.

A Member said that he got the impression that teaching was all about exams which would discourage entrants into teacher training and Mr Lancaster said that testing of pupils seemed to be getting to a younger age which did put two pressures on teachers, namely continued accountability of test results and the other was the narrowing of the curriculum that went with extra testing. He added that this could take the joy out of the job but that some Headteachers had found extra ways around that and he gave an example of some schools which had weaved expectations into the curriculum and also had weaved the joy of teaching as well.

Other questions and suggestions from Members concerned:

- Career advice at schools being given at an earlier age, showing them various options;
- How this Council could help ECC with recruitment and retention of teachers;
- On new build estates where 40% was put aside for affordable housing, perhaps those could be allocated as key worker properties;
- About 15 years ago a film production company in St Osyth had made a film showing that Tendring was a good place to live and work and wondered if it was still in business;
- Recruitment of ex-service personnel into teacher training; and
- Boarding schools, were they a good thing?

Mr Lancaster said that resources on careers advice were very limited and agreed that it would be useful to reach youngsters at an earlier age.

He said the Council could help by listening to the problems that schools were facing with recruitment, more lobbying would be helpful in attaining more teacher trainees. He suggested that Members visit schools and see how they were doing which would give them an idea of what support was needed. He also suggested that perhaps regular Press Releases of what was happening in Tendring schools would be much appreciated especially celebrating how well schools in the Tendring area were performing.

Mr Lancaster said that he thought Boarding Schools were very good especially for children with special needs and that the Government's recent green paper included mention of boarding schools and that collaboration between the public and private sector would be a good thing. Some independent schools were excellent and he mentioned how excellent the special needs school at Market Fields, Elmstead was, especially as the Headteacher was very much involved.

The Chairman thanked Mr Lancaster for his excellent presentation to the Committee and asked him to let it know if there was anything it could do to support his work.

After discussing the various issues it was **RECOMMENDED** to Cabinet that:

Cabinet look into the lack of career advice in schools as more was needed to assist pupils of the directions they could take in their future career choices.

19. **UPDATE ON COMMUNITY PROJECTS - EDUCATION**

The Council's Executive Projects Manager (Rebecca Morton) gave an update on Education and she advised the Committee that the Council was working with both teachers and schools and gave an update on the work undertaken so far. She said that there had been a Teach First Partnership Conference in May 2016 with Senior Executives and representatives from Canterbury Christ Church University.

The Teach First Summer School, she said, had been launched in the summer of 2016 for students commencing teacher training and it was intended that teachers would be placed in Tendring schools in 2017.

Mrs Morton informed the Committee that a Wellbeing Hub had started a pilot scheme with the Headteacher at Great Bentley Primary School becoming a Cluster Lead. The Headteacher was keen to work on a teacher led after school facility with trained Youth Mental Health First Aiders with the training being provided by Mental Health First Aid England. She said that it was designed to enable teachers to identify early signs of mental health issues to signpost mental health issues to mental health experts. She said it was intended to pilot the scheme in the 2016/17 academic year and if it proved successful it was intended to cascade training to other clusters in the Tendring District.

She said that a Post 16 Provision a meeting had been held in April 2016 with local education providers, Councillors and Officers to discuss education provision and what support was available and how discretionary grants could be used, for example, for transport and essential equipment.

Mrs Morton said that Memorandums of Understanding were now in place with the University of Essex and Anglia Ruskin University with a representative from Anglia Ruskin to attend a meeting of the Tendring Education Improvement Group to explore the ways the University could support primary schools, and added that secondary school links and support were already well established.

She said that when it came to school places there had been a recent meeting held with the Schools Organisation Officer at ECC regarding a 10 year Plan for school places, covering 2016 – 2026.

Mrs Morton said that there were a number of challenges ahead which meant schools in Tendring needed to maintain and raise standards, recruitment and retention of teachers which included the retention of the District's Headteachers. She added that it was necessary to encourage schools to work together, sharing resources and preparing children for school readiness.

A Member asked if in addition to the current work there were any projects looking at developing cross-skills, peer education and helping towards employment. Miss Morton said that there was nothing immediately planned but that the Education Improvement Group were keen to encourage career guidance.

A Member raised the issue of mental health and identifying youngsters with that problem and said that there had been a real concern amongst group case studies that some youngsters were waiting after 37 weeks to be assessed on their issues which was unhelpful for the children and their families suffering from those delays. He said that ECC had a responsibility for children who had been referred which had now been outsourced to a North East London Company Foundation Trust. He added that youngsters with mental health problems were not being noticed at an early enough age and were not getting the support they needed and felt that more concern should be shown.

Mrs Simpson responded by informing the Committee that she intended to contact the relevant authorities to find out more about the issue of mental health in youngsters and referral waiting times.

A mental health centre for youngsters in Colchester was mentioned by a Member who said that it was most beneficial for children up to the age of 16. He further commented there seemed to be a gap between the ages of 16 – 18 which was a critical time when a person was going to get well. He further commented that it appeared that it tended to be more girls with eating disorders and self-harming than boys.

The Chairman talked about careers advice, what options were available, and how the Council could facilitate them and look at what projects were being delivered.

After discussions amongst the Committee, it was:

RECOMMENDED to Cabinet that:

- (a) the Committee would like Cabinet to note their concerns about the lack and consistency of career's advice within schools; and

RESOLVED that

- (b) the contents of the report be noted.

The meeting was declared closed at 9.09 p.m.

Chairman