
Meeting	Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee - Task Group
Date	28 February 2022
Present	Councillors Daubeney, Fenton and Fitzpatrick
Apologies	None

In light of the changing circumstances around the Covid-19 pandemic, this meeting was held remotely. Task Groups are not decision making meetings, therefore the outcomes recorded in these minutes are not subject to approval by the Chief Operating Officer under his emergency delegated powers.

1. Election of Chair

Cllr Fitzpatrick nominated Cllr Daubeney as Chair and this was seconded by Cllr Fenton. It was therefore agreed that Cllr Daubeney be appointed Chair.

2. Declarations of Interest

Members were asked to declare any personal interests not included on the Register of Interests, any prejudicial interests or any disclosable pecuniary interests which they might have in respect of business on the agenda. None were declared.

3. Public Participation

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the council's Public Participation Scheme on general issues with the remit of the task group.

4. Scoping Report: School Holiday Food Scrutiny Review

Members considered a scoping report which set out the request from the Executive to consider the effectiveness, impact and funding of the free school meal voucher scheme alongside other grassroots community based provision and other schemes to address food poverty impacts.

The Director of Customer and Communities gave a brief background to the report and highlighted the following:

- The School Holiday Food Voucher Scheme cost £50,000 per week. The funding for the vouchers had come from a range of sources but they were coming to an end. The system was a short term solution that was not sophisticated and may not be targeting need nor avoiding duplication. The aim was to provide a long term solution that included nutritional information and parenting support in response to identified need.
- The full impact of the pandemic on the financial situation of families was not yet known, however, the financial support for Covid was ending and numbers claiming universal credit was twice as high as before the pandemic. There had also been a 30% increase in the numbers of children claiming free school meals in secondary schools.
- The National Food Strategy had recommended 3 year funding which the government had confirmed and had enabled the recruitment of a Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Officer. A Food Officer was also to be recruited to support the establishment of a food network.
- Information relating to items a-l, in paragraph 27, would be provided by the Assistant Director for Education and Officers from the Communities team.

In response to Member questions, the officer clarified the take up of the HAF programme, the recruitment timescales for the two new posts, the equalities implications, the funding for family hubs and sources of information.

There followed a discussion regarding the timescales for the report. It was noted that, due to the imminent Ofsted inspection, key officers would not immediately be available. It was therefore agreed that the task group should first examine the academic framework. It was also noted that an additional meeting of the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee (CEC) was needed ahead of the meeting of the Executive in May.

Resolved:

- i. That the scoping report be agreed.
- ii. That the task group meet to discuss the academic framework and provide an interim update at the next meeting of the Children, Education and Communities Policy and Scrutiny Committee.
- iii. That an additional meeting of CEC be scheduled for early May.

Reason:

To fulfil the Executive's request and to keep the Committee updated with the progress of the task group.

Cllr Simon Daubeney, Chair

[The meeting started at 2.02 pm and finished at 2.41 pm].