

## **Responses to Public Questions for the Children's Select Committee meeting (24<sup>th</sup> January 2020)**

**The following questions were submitted by Mr V Nicholas with responses from the service.**

### **Q1. What timetable does the County consider to be most feasible for the re-opening of the secondary school in Burnham as a through school?**

Buckinghamshire County Council is committed to ensuring that pupils in Burnham have the best possible experience of education. Burnham Park converted to academy status in 2012 when it joined E-Act, a multi-academy trust. The Academy struggled to deliver a high quality of education and was graded Inadequate by Ofsted. In addition, the school experienced falling pupil numbers, with Year 7 cohort having 21 pupils in 2018 against an admission number of 140 leaving the school economically unviable. As a result, in January 2019 E-Act invited stakeholders to participate in a formal public consultation concerning a proposal to close the academy.

Despite our objection to the proposed closure, the Secretary of State confirmed his decision to proceed and the site reverted to the Council on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

At the point of closure, there was an insufficient number of pupils attending the school to keep it open. The analysis from our Pupil Place Planning Team shows that there is still insufficient demand to re-open a school on the site. As such, there are no plans to re-open the secondary school given the insufficient demand for places. In addition, data from both Slough and the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead also confirms that there is sufficient capacity in the area to meet local demand. We will, however, continue to monitor the situation.

### **Q2. In the short-term – by the end of the Summer term 2020 – what assets at the school can be made available for community use and by other key stakeholders? Furthermore – what usage can be anticipated during the 2020/21 academic year.**

***We are all mindful that the School's Sports Hall was significantly funded by the local community, Burnham Health Promotion Trust and the outdoor all-weather pitches are also a valuable community asset.***

The Council is in the process of commissioning a property agent to undertake an options appraisal for the site including the possibility of a future educational provision and the Council's desire to see the sporting facilities being made available to the community. It is anticipated that the report will take approximately two months to complete.

Opening areas of the school for community use has a number of implications including, but not limited to, insurances, the cost of wear and tear on the property,

charging for utility use and assurances from a health and safety perspective. Currently, the Council does not have the capacity to manage these issues; however, this option will be considered as part of the review of the site, including devolving the running of the sporting/community assets to a local group.

**Q3. What strategy and plans are being developed to develop post-16 and adult education in order to retrain and up-skill potential employees in such locations as Slough Estate and Heathrow Airport? Such provision was delivered on the existing site 30 to 40 years ago and it may now be timely to consider again such an initiative. We should also be mindful as to the benefit with the Aspire initiative which is supported by SEGRO.**

Our Education and Skills Strategy identifies post 16 provision and skills development as a key strand of work; the Council's remit within the strategy is to, 'equip young people with the knowledge, skills and experience to thrive in a modern economy'.

Our current post 16 provision is managed through the provision of high quality sixth form and college places with schools and the Buckinghamshire College Group. Buckinghamshire Adult Education sits within the Council and has been re-confirmed by Ofsted as 'Good'.

Bucks Thames Valley Careers Hub works with 21 non-selective secondary schools to ensure that pupils are provided with high-quality careers information, advice and guidance, skills development and enterprise experiences. The schools involved in the Hub receive support in order to achieve the Gatsby benchmarks, which are the key measures used to identify outcomes in this area. Performance data (Autumn 2019) evidences Buckinghamshire as the joint best performing Hub in the country.

Neither the Slough Trading Estate nor Heathrow Airport are located within Buckinghamshire and are therefore not in our primary delivery area for Adult Education. If grant funding were to be available to support such work and it was in line with our corporate objectives then we would bid for it along with any other interested Local Authorities.

**Q4. Access and Egress to and from the existing site has always been problematic and the school's boundary in Stomp Road remains most unsatisfactory. What steps can be taken to ensure that this issue can be addressed in a constructive manner?**

The main access to the school site is from Opendale Road and the junction with Stomp Road has pavements on both sides of the road. Given that the school site is currently vacant, we do not consider access and egress to the site an issue.

**The following questions were submitted by Mrs S Hodges with responses from the service.**

**Q1. What training is provided and recorded for Educational Health and Care Coordinators to ensure they are fully up to date with current legislation and**

**statutory requirements for the EHC plan Assessment and subsequent implementation if necessary and how is this reviewed.**

The training plan for Educational Health and Care Coordinators (EHCC) is comprehensive, detailed and thorough and based on the 2014 SEND Reforms. All EHCCs accessed this mandatory training over the course of the year and this was checked through the appraisal system that the Council uses for staffing. In 2019, EHCCs accessed training in a number of areas, including but not limited to:

- EHC needs assessment process and decision-making
- Key indicators for writing quality plans
- SEND Transport
- Safeguarding

During 2019, each EHCC accessed an average of 10 training and development days.

**Q2. What training is provided to transport officers to ensure they are up to date with current statutory requirements and legislation.**

A training schedule is in place to ensure that all Transport and Transport Compliance Officers have the right training to ensure that they are up to date with statutory requirements. This includes:

- All staff within the Integrated Transport Service must undertake annual e-learning training. Compliance with undertaking this training is closely monitored through the staff appraisal process. The training includes:
  - Safeguarding & child protection
  - Equalities & diversity
  - GDPR
  - Prevent
- Regular briefings on policy and legislation changes are provided to staff through quarterly service-wide all staff meetings and via team meetings. In addition, the individual training needs of staff are considered as part of the induction process for new staff, and through an individualised development plan for each staff member.
- All Transport Officers also attend the mandatory safeguarding training course provided to all drivers and passenger assistants in order to hold a BCC ID badge.
- Additional training for Transport Compliance Officers is planned for spring 2020 on SEND as part of the rollout of Independent Travel Training for young people. This training will provide Transport Compliance Officers with a greater

understanding of the issues faced by those with special educational needs and disabilities.