

Children and Young People Committee  
10<sup>th</sup> October 2023

Item 3: Petitions and Public Questions

	Question from:	Question/ comment:
1.	Antony Carpen Local resident	<p>The Chair of the CYP Committee responded to my PQ at Cambridge City Council's East Area Committee on Citizenship Studies GCSE for Cambridgeshire. See <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7rguMwVj00&amp;t=57m20s">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l7rguMwVj00&amp;t=57m20s</a> for the question, and the response by Cllr Goodliffe.</p> <p>I also tabled a question about citizenship studies in the lifelong learning sector to the Combined Authority, and their response is in the responses document on the <a href="#">Combined Authority website</a>.</p> <p>With only 145 students in Cambridgeshire having taken the GCSE in Citizenship Studies in 2022, what assessment has the County Council made of the distribution of places across the county that offer Citizenship Studies GCSE? Please could I urge the County Council to lobby the academy chains across the county to work together and employ some specialist teachers that could cover more than one school in order to make the GCSE in Citizenship Studies available.]</p>
	<b>Response from:</b>	
	Councillor Bryony Goodliffe, Chair, Children and Young People Committee	<p>Thank for you raising this concern.</p> <p>We encourage all secondary schools to offer as wide a breadth as possible of subjects for all pupils. This is however in a context of teacher shortage, financial constraints and an accountability framework which</p>

	Question from:	Question/ comment:
		places greater focus on a limited number of subjects. All secondary schools in Cambridgeshire are part of academy trusts, but we will certainly pass on the helpful suggestion you make around sharing specialist teachers across a trust or local area.

#### Item 7: SEND Service and Safety Valve update

	Question from:	Question/ comment:
2.	Liz Day Local resident	<p>Information within the report is aspirational in wording towards improving SEND Support as early as possible in the educational journey of children and young people, with special educational needs and disability. I am totally in support of that sentiment. I do hold concerns that there is zero mention of statutory requirements under the Children's and Families act that the local authority hold significant responsibility and therefore outcomes including Key Performance Indicators towards achievement</p> <p>The report updates on implementation of work streams agreed as part of the Safety Valve Deal, shows a strong bias towards monitoring of financial sustainability, as detailed within the Local Government act. I totally agree that financial sustainability is essential and important to well managed local government and education for children and young people in the local area. It is a huge concern to me that there are priorities within the conflict between these two statutory acts and the Department for Education has pushed pressure onto the local authority to accept the Safety Valve Deal, as a way to resolve an increase in a deficit budget of the Designated Schools Grant found in the High Needs Block Fund. The only budget that seemingly has been allowed to accrue an accumulated deficit over time. The fact there has been an accumulated deficit during several years and since the inception of the Children's and Families act would suggest there has consistently been insufficient funding provided to the local authority to adequately fund demand for support by a demographic that has protected characteristic under the Equality act. That really is poor management of resources and intentionally underfunding causing ongoing detriment and harm to many thousands of children and young people.</p> <p>The report suggests that increase in demand has been largely due to schools pushing for Education, Health and Care assessments with a view of securing the legal document known as and Education, Health and Care plan. That details specific needs and how to meet those needs in a suitable and accessible way. To game the system to secure more funding.. There is not statistical data included that shows that premise to</p>

	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question/ comment:</b>
		<p>be true or otherwise. As a peer supporter to many families of children and young people within the local area and beyond and from feedback within my networks, I can can confidently state that no parent carer supports schools to make spurious formal requests for EHC assessments to secure additional funding for educational settings. All parent carers will be focused on securing an accessible and suitable education that meets their child's needs adequately. As it states within the law (C&amp;Fa). Schools often appear ill equipped to attend to their part in the process. Examples are available upon request.</p> <p>My question is how are the Local Authority going to meet it's statutory requirements under that detailed within the Children's and Families act?</p>
	<b>Response from:</b>	
	<p>Councillor Bryony Goodliffe, Chair, Children and Young People Committee</p>	<p>Thank you for your time in addressing the Children and Young People (CYP) Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2023.</p> <p>All our services aim to meet the requirements of both the Children's and Families Act and the SEND code of practice. Both Officers and Members have been clear the programme supporting the Safety Valve arrangements will continue to meet our statutory duties. The Safety Valve process is a financial programme which supports improvement in SEND service delivery including transformation and efficiency measures. The deal agreed was proposed by Cambridgeshire County Council and the workstreams contained within it were designed locally to meet the needs of our children and young people and all stakeholders that work within SEND. The focus is on early intervention and local delivery and not to deny any child or young person the support they need.</p> <p>In terms of funding, the County Council has made many representations over an extended period, including meeting with Ministers, for further funding for SEND in Cambridgeshire to reflect our unique challenges. These have been unsuccessful, but the recent Green Paper on SEND and the response in the SEND and Alternative Provision action plan both reference a further reform of SEND funding. We will continue to make representations on the low level of funding.</p> <p>You referenced in your question the challenges of funding and schools using the education, health and care plan (EHCP) process to secure further funding. This is just one of the areas we believe has led to an increase in our EHCP numbers. Our observation here relates to the low level of funding for Cambridgeshire Schools and school leaders have told us they would like more resources to provide support for all children</p>

	<b>Question from:</b>	<b>Question/ comment:</b>
		<p>with SEND earlier as this could avoid the need for statutory process. The current level of budget challenges means that more children are being referred into statutory assessment. Cambridgeshire is 136<sup>th</sup> out of the 149 Local Authorities for its level of funding. This has a significant impact on the schools notional SEND funding to support early work with children with additional education needs, support for those at SEND support and to meet the element 1 and 2 of funding for an EHCP. We are working hard with schools to improve practice in SEND through aspects of our work (and safety valve deal) including the Ordinarily Available toolkit.</p> <p>The County Council is fully committed to meeting all its statutory processes and it welcomes the additional investment the Safety Valve process brings to develop new provision and move towards a more sustainable funding position.</p>