

COUNCILLOR ERIC TATTON-KELLY
CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

KEY PRIORITIES.

My priorities remain much as they were when I last spoke to you some months ago.

1. Special Needs. As Panel members will know the Special Needs Review is now well under way. I have been closely following events. I would like here to recognise SCYP Panel's work in this area. Scrutiny may wish to consider this report after it is published.
2. Truancy. There have been considerable improvements in this area over the past three years. The greatest improvements have been in the primary sector but secondary is also improving. I have been out with the Truancy Team in both Doncaster and Thorne and was delighted to see the opening of the Truancy Watch initiative in the Frenchgate Centre where shops will not serve children of school age during term time. The work I have seen is very effective and the team is well focused on returning children to school.
3. Schools and Attainment. Changes are taking place with the growth of Academies. Doncaster has one of the highest percentages of secondary academies and a growing number of primaries are showing an interest. Council needs to rise to the challenge of helping to provide for the needs of all schools. These children are Doncaster children for whom we are responsible. Doncaster schools are generally rising to the challenge of improving their attainment figures but overall remain a few percentage points below national figures. There is still work to do by governing bodies, LA officers and staff teams in individual schools. I have made several visits to schools in the borough and more are planned.
4. Council recognises that considerable difficulties remain for schools with traveller populations or where children move from a school but remain on role for a month following that move, even when the school knows they will not be returning. Scrutiny may wish to keep a watching brief on these issues.
5. Safeguarding. This is always of major importance in so many areas and will remain a priority. All working with children must recognise the need to keep them safe. I have been carefully briefed by a number of professionals and am a member of the Doncaster Safeguarding Board, which brings all professionals together to address many difficult issues and ensure our children are safe.

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6. Looked After Children. We have a corporate responsibility towards this group of children and I am closely monitoring this. The general welfare, school attainment and health of our LAC remain a concern. Numbers of children in the care of the LA have been rising; as is the case across the country, but recently our numbers seem to have steadied. Scrutiny may wish to consider in greater depth our role as corporate parents and our responsibilities to young people in our children's homes. It would be helpful if, when visits are arranged, councillors who have made these visits provide a written brief which I can consider as Lead Member.
7. School Places. Scrutiny will know that the demographics of Doncaster are changing. They may wish to consider the sufficiency of school places across the borough.

I will continue to engage with officers and challenge constructively to ensure to best outcomes for our children.