

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE – 20 JANUARY 2026

QUESTIONS ASKED BY AN ELECTED MEMBER UNDER
STANDING ORDER 7

Question asked by Mr Andrew Innes CC:

“A bid was recently put in by Discovery Trust to Loughborough College to use the existing Melton campus site (which includes the Theatre) as a venue for post 16 special educational needs provision. I understand that LCC has also been in similar discussions about the use of this site with other providers. We do not have adequate facilities in Leicestershire to accommodate post 16 requirements, and therefore we spend a large amount of money moving our residents around county or outside of county. To have such a provision, in a ready-made campus in Melton Mowbray, under these circumstances makes sense, not just commercially, but also to provide high quality services for some of our most vulnerable residents. I would also point out that this could also act as a catalyst to save the popular Melton Theatre that is in serious threat of closure due to Loughborough College withdrawing support, and their wish to sell the site. I would like to ask:

- a) What discussions have taken place, has there been any progress in these discussions?
- b) What is Leicestershire County Council’s view on commissioning post 16 provision?
- c) Should the Council be having serious talks with providers and Loughborough College about the future use of these facilities?

It is our duty to our residents to make sure we have good quality, easy accessible provision, for all of our residents, and I would advocate that we look into these proposals seriously.”

Reply by the Chairman:

- a) The Council continues to recognise the importance of robust and effective planning for post-16 education and training, particularly for young people with additional needs. Leicestershire has a diverse educational landscape, including school sixth forms, colleges, and specialist institutions, and our approach remains firmly aligned with national policy direction and the principle of mainstream inclusion wherever appropriate.

The Council has held discussions with officers and key stakeholders in relation to post-16 SEND provision in Melton, including consideration of the Discovery Trust’s proposal. This included analysis of current and projected demand, cost, long-term viability, accessibility, suitability and sustainability of the proposed venue and alignment with both national policy and local strategic direction for post-16 SEND places.

Following this evaluation, the Council concluded that the proposal could not be pursued, primarily due to the low and stable number of young people with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) within the Melton area, the existence of alternative provision options and concerns about the appropriateness and sustainability of the site for the proposed purpose. The Discovery Trust has acknowledged that, whilst they accept the Council is unable to pursue a post 16 development, they indicated their intention to bring forward a revised proposal focusing on pre-16 specialist places. Officers will review any such proposal upon receipt and will ensure that stakeholders are kept informed.

- b) The Council remains firmly committed to improving post-16 pathways and outcomes for all young people, including those with SEND. This commitment includes ensuring the sufficiency of high-quality, sustainable provision, supporting mainstream inclusion, consistent with national policy direction and strengthening transition pathways into an adulthood of independence, choice, and control. To support these aims, the Council has recently appointed a Post-16 Service Manager whose responsibilities are focussed on understanding and analysing local need, engaging with all post-16 providers, identifying any gaps in provision and leading the development of a county-wide Post-16 strategy.
- c) The Council is open to engaging with providers, including Loughborough College, where proposals are viable, sustainable, and aligned with the Council's strategic direction for inclusive education. While the decision about the future use of the Melton campus rests with the College, the Council will continue to work constructively with partners where this supports improved sufficiency of appropriate local provision, good outcomes for children and young people and long-term sustainability of educational pathways. Any discussions about the future of the site must therefore be grounded in demand analysis, strategic fit, and the feasibility of delivering high-quality inclusive mainstream provision.