

MINUTES OF MEETING Children and Young People's Scrutiny Panel HELD ON Thursday, 21st September, 2023, 7.00 pm

PRESENT:

**Councillors: Makbule Gunes (Chair), Anna Abela, Gina Adamou,
Mark Blake, Lotte Collett and Sue Jameson**

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred Members present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting, and Members noted the information contained therein'.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for lateness was received from Cllr Collet and Cllr Abela.

3. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

There were no items of urgent business.

The Panel noted that Item 8 on Stop and Search would be taken before Item 7 on the Youth Justice strategy.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

5. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

6. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting on 26th June were agreed as a correct record.

7. STOP & SEARCH

The Panel received a verbal update in relation to a safeguarding project to look at Stop and Search, including a pilot programme to look at the safeguarding needs of children stopped and searched by police in Haringey. The update was provided by

Bev Hendricks, AD for Safeguarding and Social Care. Ann Graham, Director of Children's Services was present for this item. Cllr Brabazon, Cabinet Member for Children, Schools and Families was also present for this item. The following summarises the update that was provided to Members:

- The Project was initiated because of information relayed to the Director of Children's Services (DCS) about children's experiences in Haringey with Stop and Search. The information related to a child stopped and searched 12 times over a period of time and the fact that child was not referred for support. Since then, officers have spoken to a range of families and other relevant groups.
- From the above case it became clear that there was no requirement to refer the case to child welfare agencies unless the attending police officer thought that there was a safeguarding concern, based on a safeguarding criterion used by the police.
- The DCS then entered into a dialogue with the Borough Commander and it was agreed that a pilot project would be set up. Phase 1 of the project was an examination of 6 cases of children being stopped and searched, that were not referred on to the MASH following use of the police matrix, in order to see if there were safeguarding opportunities that had been missed.
- The 6 cases were examined against information held by other agencies largely Children's Social Care and it was discovered that there were safeguarding concerns that could have been picked up. From the findings of this, there was further agreement to look at a larger sample of cases.
- The project required an information sharing agreement to be agreed with the Police which took a long time.
- Officers agreed that they wouldn't publish the data before the police, partners to the pilot were ready to share and it was hoped that this would form part of the police Children First strategy and that was the reason this information was being shared as a verbal update.
- A joint conference with the Police was being organised in Haringey on 12th December 2023 where the findings of this work would be shared, and the police would set out their response.
- Phase 2 of the project involve an examination of a sample of 90 cases. Of those 90 cases:
 - 3 involved children who were Looked After Children in Haringey. But the authority was not informed of the stop and search as corporate parents.
 - 14 cases involved children from households with domestic abuse
 - 16 cases involved children with significant housing instability
 - Some of the children were known to the Haringey Learning Partnership and other young people had a range of needs including autism and SEND, (special educational needs and disabilities).
- Some of the key concerns that came out of these cases were around the fact that the details of the cases were not shared with other agencies and the only reason that these issues came to light was because the police recorded the stop and search. Officers wanted to see a trauma-led approach adopted rather than one based purely on crime prevention and detection.
- Officers have spoken to DCSs across London and received their support for the pilot.

- Officers emphasised that the project was a marathon and not a sprint and that it was felt that the project was moving at the correct pace to bring people on board and to effect sustained change.
- The DCS advised the Panel that on 24th August she met with the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and that he was supportive of the business case and the impact of trauma on children who were stopped and searched. The DCS and AD for Safeguarding and Social Care would be meeting with MOPAC on this from September.

The following arose from the discussion of this item:

- a. The Panel sought clarification around invites to the conference. In response, officers advised that all scrutiny councillors would be invited, with a particular focus on those from the areas of N17, N15 & N22. Police colleagues and the Directors of Children's Services from across London would also be invited.
- b. The Panel questioned whether the police were obliged to inform a child's parents or even ask about whether they had a social worker. In response, officers advised that they did not have to inform a child's parents and that the only obligation under the law was to inform if there were safeguarding concerns based on the matrix they used. Officers advised that it was expected that a change in the legal framework would be needed if police officers were required to inform parents. There was also a recognition that for some children, perhaps a minority, informing their parents may increase risk and this would need careful consideration.
- c. In response to a question, officers advised that the youngest child stopped as part of the data they had seen was 10 years old. The numbers of children stopped within a particular age group increased with each cohort.
- d. In response to a question, officers advised that the conference would involve Children in Care and that children had been engaged with throughout the wider project.
- e. A co-opted member of the panel raised concerns about a perception that nothing had changed within the police and also raised concerns that even working collaboratively with Police would not bring about any meaningful change. It was suggested that the Council should be looking at how more meaningful engagement could be taken forward with the community. In response, the DCS recognised that the issues people experienced with the police were generational. However, the DCS argued, it was her job as a Safeguarding lead to keep pushing for change.
- f. In relation to a question, the Panel were advised that the timeframe for the child stopped 12 times was between March 2022 and June 2023. Ethnicity figures for the cases considered may be released as part of the conference report, but that a level of disproportionality would not be surprising.
- g. A member of the Panel highlighted the findings of the Baroness Casey review and in particular the case studies within the report, which painted a clear picture that the issues with the Police were institutional and systemic. The Members emphasised that the key to improving the culture of the Police was public scrutiny and accountability. It was suggested that the Children's Safeguarding Board should receive reports on this issue. It was also suggested, that following the conference in December, the Cabinet Member should consider writing to the Shadow Justice Minister, as this was an area for reform considerations. In response, the DCS advised that it was not her job to

- reform the culture of the police or the laws governing the way the police operated. However, she was determined slowly build confidence, in order to try and bring about a positive change for children.
- h. The Cabinet Member emphasised the fact that this piece of work was unique and that in her opinion, it was one of the most creative pieces of work done by Children's Services to try and work a different angle to what was a very difficult issue. The Cabinet Member set out that the fact that a number of children were found to be Looked After or to have Special Educational needs, showed how critical the piece of work was.
 - i. Officers asked Members to use their contacts with counterparts in other boroughs to support them and their DCSs to undertake similar audits with their respective BCUs across London.

RESOLVED

That the update was noted.

8. YOUTH JUSTICE STRATEGIC PLAN

The Panel received a report which set out the priorities within the statutory Youth Justice Plan for 2023-24. The report was introduced by Jackie, Difolco, Assistant Director: Early Help, Prevention and SEND, as set out in the agenda pack at pages 9-128. The Director of Children's Services and the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Schools were also present for this item. The following arose during the discussion of this item:

- a. The Panel queried what preparations had been put in place in anticipation of an upcoming Ofsted inspection. In response, officers set out that an external provider had been commissioned to do a diagnostic assessment of the service. This involved looking at the service, talking to staff, speaking to the Board and reviewing a sample of our cases. This provided management with a good level of assurance, particularly around the impact on young people and around governance. The diagnostic highlighted the need for strengthened management oversight. Since then additional resources have been allocated to the Head of Service and the number of Team Managers had increased from two to three, with one team focused on prevention and the other two on court work.
- b. The Panel queried the ethnicity breakdown in the report and questioned why there was no separate category for Turkish/Kurdish people. In response, officers advised that they were restricted by the ethnicity codes that were allocated to nationally to each Youth Justice Board. However, the information given to the Youth Justice Board was broken down in more detail. It just was not reflected in the report as this was set nationally.
- c. A Panel Member highlighted a recent piece of research carried out that went through the records of two million Children in Care, which found out that they were 33% more likely to end up in the criminal justice system. That number increased further for people from certain ethnic backgrounds. The Panel Member suggested that officers should be tracking this metric locally. The Panel Member also highlighted the ever worsening state of young people's

prisons and commented that it was hard to see how you could rehabilitate a person in that environment.

**N.B. Clerk's Note – the study referred to above is referenced in the following article:*
<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/21/care-experienced-children-eight-times-more-likely-enter-youth-justice-system-england>

- d. The Panel questioned what the factors were that had led to Haringey having the lowest reoffending rates in London. In response, officers set out that it was about the quality of interventions that were carried out by case managers. Haringey did not reduce staffing levels in this area during Covid and this had allowed the team to carry out better quality interventions. These interventions were evidence based and therapeutic and were informed by a trauma-led approach. This was partially due to good training for staff. The Director advised that that it was a difficult area to work in and that some of the more challenging cases were around people who were not known to authorities who suddenly came into contact with the youth Justice service at a high tariff, which meant that there was no scope to undertake preventative work. There was also a grooming element involved. The Director reiterated that this was a complicated and challenging cohort to work with in order to keep them away from the criminal justice system.
- e. A co-opted member of the panel welcomed the report and questioned whether there was a summary report that could be shared with school governors. In response, officers advised that they would look at how a summary report could be shared with schools. It was noted that the Plan was very detailed as it was a statutory document but that some thought would have to be given as to how to best summarise it.
- f. The Panel questioned whether there was a co-production approach adopted to the Board and Plan at a strategic level. In response, officers set out that there was a young people's participation network that met with managers from the service on a quarterly basis. There was also a separate parent/carers forum. The discussions from these sessions were reported up to the Youth Justice Board.
- g. In response to a question, officers advised that they were developing an ongoing relationship with the Tottenham Foundation and would continue to work with them.
- h. The Panel sought assurances around whether there was engagement with CAMHS services and use of behaviour analysis. In response, officers set out that there was a CAMHS officer seconded to the team on the basis of 1.3 FTE. The CAMHS officers tended to do undertake therapeutic or behaviour work as part of the trauma-led approach. Officers highlighted that there were a number of evidence based practices adopted by the team set out at Section 21 of the report. The team commissioned a range of interventions, such as the Ether Programme that worked with young black men and looked at aspirational outcomes. These are detailed at section 22 of the Plan.

RESOLVED

That Members of the Scrutiny Panel note the contents of the report and plan, directing any comments and observations to the Assistant Director: Early Help, Prevention and SEND.

9. **SKILLS AND CAREERS: PROVISION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE WHO DO NOT GO TO UNIVERSITY**

The Panel received a report which provided information on the education, training and employment pathways available to young people post 16, with a focus on non-academic routes and information about the advice and guidance available to help young people make choices about their future career pathways. The report was introduced by Julie Khan, Employment & Skills Manager as set out in the agenda pack at pages 129 to 135. Ann Graham, Director of Children's Services, Jackie Difolco, AD for Early Help, Prevention and SEND, and Cllr Zena Brabazon, Cabinet Member for Children, Families & Schools were also present for this agenda item. The following arose during the discussion of this:

- a. The Panel sought clarification about the number of internships available for young people. In response, officers confirmed that there were 12 apprenticeships available internally across the Council and that they were also looking for further apprenticeship opportunities across the borough, including in catering roles. There were 23 young people signed up for the next round and the Council was looking at providing 60 places over five years as minimum.
- b. The Panel provided feedback that the supported internships did not always reflect what students did at college and questioned how the Council was supporting creative roles such as in art or photography. In response, officers set out that there was a supported internship co-ordinator who matched young people with their area of study and that work was happening with providers to bring more of these opportunities forward. Officers set out that the supported internships were a bespoke programme working with sixth forms to match up the skills and interests of young people. Officers noted that this was a work in progress but that they tried to make sure the opportunities were as diverse as possible.
- c. The Panel sought clarification about the 2.1% of children who were not in education, employment or training (NEET) and how this compared with other boroughs. In response, officers advised that this was average across London but that this reflected steady progress from a position of Haringey being the worst performing borough on this metric. Officers also noted that performance against this measure had decreased due to an improvement in the number of children who were not known to the Council (down from 7% to 1.4%) which had increased the number of children who were NEET.
- d. Officers agreed to provide a written update on how schools were performing in relation to the Gatsby benchmarks on career guidance. **(Action: Julie Khan).**
- e. The Panel emphasised the role of networks for some young people and also emphasised the career opportunities that were available in the construction sector. In response, officers advised that there was a degree of leverage

through development and S106 agreements in relation to stipulating a percentage of local labour and apprenticeship schemes. Officers also acknowledged the role of the construction sector and the fact that opportunities in this area were available through school based work placement schemes.

RESOLVED

Noted

10. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

RESOLVED

That the Panel considered its work plan for 2022-24, attached at Appendix A of the report, and whether any amendments were required.

11. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

N/A

12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

- 13 November
- 4 January
- 20 February

CHAIR: Councillor Makbule Gunes

Signed by Chair

Date