

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING ADVISORY COMMITTEE HELD ON TUESDAY, 18TH APRIL, 2017, 19:15.

PRESENT:

Councillors: Patrick Berryman, Jennifer Mann, Liz Morris, Felicia Opoku, Anne Stennett and Elin Weston (Chair)

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred those present to agenda Item 1 as shown on the agenda in respect of filming at this meeting and asked that those present reviewed and noted the information contained therein.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (IF ANY)

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hare.

Apologies were also received from Annie Walker, Kim Holt & Emma Cummergen.

3. ACTIONS ARISING FROM THE MEETING WITH ASPIRE

NOTED: The actions listed in the notes of the meeting with Aspire.

The Committee noted with the thanks the work undertaken, and the progress made by the Director of Housing Demand around the Housing pledge.

4. URGENT BUSINESS

None.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

6. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 6th February 2017 were AGREED.

The Committee requested a short update on the impact of the recent fostering campaign advertised on Sky and whether this had resulted in any potential foster parents coming forward. **(Action: Sarah Alexander).**

7. MATTERS ARISING

The Committee NOTED the Corporate Parenting Agenda Plan 2016/17

8. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

RECEIVED the report on Performance for the Year to the end of February 2017. Report included in the agenda pack (pages 13 to 20).

NOTED in response to discussion:

- An overall improving trajectory in relation to the majority of performance indicators.
- 437 children were in care on the last day of February 2016 or 72 per 10,000 population including 36 unaccompanied asylum seeker children. There has been a gradual increase in the level of children in care in comparison to the position at the end of March 2016 - 30 more children in care. Haringey's rate of looked after children in 2015/16 was within the inter-quartile range and close to the rate of its statistical neighbours (69 per 10,000 population), although the current rate remained above the London (51) and national average (60).
- At the end of February, 95% of looked after children had an up to date Care Plan.
- The latest published data shows Haringey's position as second in the country for achievement in both Maths and English A*-C at GCSE (45.2%) and top in Attainment 8. On the Progress 8 measure Haringey ranks 6th nationally but also had more Children looked After pupils (25) than any of the top 5 Local authorities.
- The Committee commended the excellent GCSE results and formally congratulated the work of all involved including the virtual school
- The average duration of care proceedings for concluded cases was 26 weeks during the period September to December 2016 which represented a further improvement from the 32.5 weeks in Q2 and 37 weeks in Q1. It was the first time the authority had achieved the target figure of a 26 week average case duration.
- Haringey's latest 3 year rolling average position for timeliness of children placed for adoption, published in the Adoption Scorecard in April 2017 was 683 days for the period 2013-16, against a target figure of 426. The Committee noted that whilst significantly above the government target, Haringey's performance was similar to the average of its statistical neighbours at 696 days.
- 83 or 22% of Looked After Children at the end of February were placed 20 miles or more from Haringey compared to a 16% target and 19% at the end of March 2016. However, there were good reasons for those placements outside the borough, with many linked to complex care requirements or long term foster

care arrangements. Although higher than national levels this proportion remained just slightly above the average for London.

- The Chair advised the Committee that performance related to care leavers notably around the number in suitable accommodation, those in education employment and training and the number in touch with the local authority; were being picked up through the care leaver group and that a full update on this work would be provided to the Committee at a future meeting, likely to be the autumn.
- 82% of Children in Care visits were recorded as completed in the relevant timescales in February. 76 children were recorded as having an overdue visit at the 28th February, most of these within the young people in care team. Performance in this area has remained below target since October 2014.
- The Chair commented that performance around children in care visits had continued to lag behind improvements in other areas and sought assurances around what was being done to improve performance. In response, officers advised that monthly performance panels were undertaken with representatives from the virtual school and the performance team to review individual cases where visits were late, and to hold team managers and individual social workers to account.
- The Committee requested that an adoption paper be brought to the next committee outlining the reasons behind the fall in adoptions and also setting out the local, regional and national picture. **(Action: Sarah Alexander)**.
- The Committee requested that the full adoption scorecard also be shared at a future performance update, once it was published. **(Action: Margaret Gallagher)**.
- In response to a query around the reasons behind worsening performance on the percentage of dental visits; the Committee was advised that in most cases where a 6 monthly visit was missed, the visit did occur but was perhaps a month or two late. This was particularly the case with older children. It was also noted that there was likely some issues with the inputting of data. The Committee requested further qualitative information was provided on the extent of dental health within the LAC, as appose to just the number that received a dental visit within 6 months for the October meeting. **(Action: Lynn Carrington)**.
- The Committee requested that a short report for noting be brought to the next committee which outlined some of the key issues and examined whether the performance measure used for dental visits was the most appropriate. **(Action: Margaret Gallagher)**.
- The Committee was advised that the some of the main reasons behind care leavers who were not in touch with the Council included asylum seekers who had gone underground and young people who were in the prison system, and probation services had failed to pass on their whereabouts. The Committee

requested a briefing outlining the reasons behind Haringey having a higher proportion where care leavers no longer required services (13% compared to 3% nationally). **(Action: Dominic Porter Moore & Margaret Gallagher).**

AGREED to note the report.

9. HOUSING OFFER TO LAC

The Committee noted the discussion on the Housing pledge discussed during the earlier meeting with Aspire.

The Committee were advised that elements of the Housing pledge would either be incorporated into a wider Aspire pledge, or that there would be an Aspire focused version of the Housing pledge.

The Chair reiterated that she would like to have a regular Aspire agenda item on future Full Council meetings and that the Aspire pledge would hopefully be ready for Annual Council on 22nd May. It was proposed that the Housing pledge could be then adopted at the following Full Council meeting.

It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate the Housing pledge to the Committee for final comments. **(Action: Clerk).**

10. HARINGEY PLEDGE

The Committee noted the discussion on the Aspire pledge discussed during the earlier meeting with Aspire.

It was agreed that the Clerk would circulate the Aspire pledge to the Committee for final comments. **(Action: Clerk).**

The Committee agreed to inviting two members of the Aspire group to present the pledge to Full Council.

11. FOSTER CARE CONTRACT

NOTED the Commissioning of Foster Care Recruitment report introduced by the Head of Service, Children in Care and Placements, which was included in the agenda pack at pages 21-23. The Committee was advised that a review was undertaken in 2016 and it was agreed to put the contract out to tender. This was unsuccessful and no bids were received for the contract. Following the tender, a market testing exercise was undertaken by the Commissioning team which identified 4 external providers. A further tendering exercise was undertaken, which resulted in a solitary bid for the contract. The bid was assessed in March and it was concluded that the provider did not meet the requirements of the tender on cost grounds.

The Head of Service, Children in Care and Placements advised that an interim contract with the former contractor had been extended until the end of June 2017. The Committee noted that the contract was based on payment by results and that four new foster carers had been brought to Panel since January 2017. Given the poor market

response, it had been agreed to take forward an interim in-house model whilst other options were considered. The Committee were advised that the options were:

- A neighbouring local authority taking on the training and recruitment function.
- A partnership arrangement with a neighbouring council to take on all the activity for the fostering function recruitment training and approvals.
- The North London Fostering & Adoption Consortium providing either of the two options above as a collective.
- Implementing an in-house foster care service

It was anticipated that initial feedback on the viability of these options would be received in April. In order to ensure that the department fulfilled its statutory duty as a fostering agency, an interim recruitment team had been set up which would be working closely with the communications team.

The Committee expressed its ongoing concerns about the delays to the process and the failed attempts to go out to the market. The Chair acknowledged that nobody was happy with the current arrangements and reiterated that bringing the foster care recruitment service back in-house was one option that was being examined. Officers advised that the challenge facing the Council was ensuring that any future in-house service did not perform as poorly as it had done prior to 2014, when the decision was taken to go out to the private sector. It was suggested that strong active management of the service was key determinant in a successful service, particularly given the challenges faced in an increasingly difficult market.

The Committee sought assurances that the assessment of options and the ultimate outcome of the decision would be firmly based upon evidence. The Chair acknowledged these concerns but also cautioned that the Council needed to have appropriate foster care services in place, and that there was a balance between the need to develop a firm evidence base and the need to deliver at pace. Officers advised that the costings for the interim service were still being assessed by the Commissioning team.

12. VERBAL UPDATE ON PAN-LONDON ADOPTION BID

NOTED the verbal update given by the Director of Children's Services on the Pan-London Adoption bid. A handout was tabled which set out where the planning process had got to and what the next steps and timescales were. The Committee was advised that the majority of London local authorities had signed up in principle to the joint agreement with a hub & spoke model. There were five or six authorities exploring alternative options including an agreement with the Coram adoption agency. The Committee was advised that the proposed implementation phase was scheduled for November 2018 to July 2019.

The Chair advised the Committee that they should email any further questions to herself and the DCS.

13. COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE LEVELS OF LAC

NOTED the report presented given by the Head of Virtual Schools which set out the educational performance of the LAC in relation to ethnic background, focusing in particular on black/African Caribbean children and young people in comparison with their peer group.

The Committee requested that an update on the information contained in the report be provided on an annual basis. The Committee also requested that information be provided about the gender breakdown in performance levels of the LAC. **(Action: Fiona Smith).**

14. SUPERVISION ORDERS

The Chair requested that the Supervision Order report be rolled over to the following meeting given that there would also be a broad paper around adoption. **(Action: Sarah Alexander).**

15. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

In response to a query from Cllr Morris, the Chair advised that she and Cllr Arthur were looking into the campaign put forward by the Children's Society around giving care leavers a Council Tax exemption. It was noted that exemptions had already been set for the next municipal year and that the proposal could have a significant cost implication.

Future meetings

NOTED the following provisional dates:

4th July 2017

19th October 2017

16th January 2018

20th March 2018

Meetings are scheduled to start at 6.30pm.

The meeting ended at 20:40 hours.

CHAIR: Councillor Elin Weston

Signed by Chair

Date