

# **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY, 5TH JULY, 2016, 7.00 - 9.00 pm**

## **PRESENT:**

**Councillors: Kirsten Hearn (Chair), Mark Blake, Toni Mallett, Reg Rice and Viv Ross**

## **22. 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.

## **23. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Morris.

## **24. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

## **25. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

## **26. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS**

None.

## **27. MINUTES**

### **AGREED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of 3 March 2016 be approved.

## **28. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP**

In answer to a question, it was noted that the scrutiny protocol had been formally agreed by Council following cross party discussion by Members.

### **AGREED:**

1. That the terms of reference and protocol for overview and scrutiny be noted; and
2. That the policy areas, remits and membership for each scrutiny panel be noted.

## **29. WORK PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT**

The Chair reported that it was proposed that the Panel would undertake a review that considered how Haringey could become a child friendly borough. The other major piece of work by the Panel would focus on the response to refugee and asylum seeker children and consideration would be given to doing this as a “scrutiny in a day” exercise.

It was noted that the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was now within the terms of reference of the Panel. In response to this, an update on progress with the CAMHS Transformation would now be considered by the Children and Young People’s Panel rather than the Adults and Health Panel.

### **AGREED:**

That, subject to the above mentioned addition, the areas outlined in Appendix A to the report be prioritised for inclusion in the 2016/17 scrutiny work programme and recommended for approval to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 21 July.

## **30. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS**

Councillor Elin Weston, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families reported on key priorities from her portfolio as follows:

- She was keen to build on the progress that had been outlined in the OFSTED inspection report of 2014 in services for Children in Need of Help and Protection, Looked After Children and Care Leavers. It was important to ensure that services were safe and sustainable and able to progress to being rated as “good”. She was pleased that a progress report on the issue had been included in the Panel’s work plan for the year. There was a lot being done on this issue this would include work with Aspire, the borough’s children in care council, to ensure the voice of the child was heard;
- She wished to work towards the authority becoming a “child centred” Council and welcomed the Panel’s intention to undertake a review on the issue. A key part of this would be ensuring that, where children and young people received help from the Children and Young People’s Service, their voice was heard and taken into account throughout. This would also be about the Council, on a corporate basis, taking into account the needs of children in all areas of its work;
- A new strategy for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities was to be developed;
- The 30 hours free childcare offer for 3 and 4 year olds was due to be implemented in 2017. There was, as yet, no details of the funding arrangements and it was likely that a major piece of work would be required prior to its implementation; and

- In respect of schools, the Government's academisation agenda was still a major issue. In addition, there was to be a change in the national funding formula in two years time which would affect schools significantly. The specific details of the changes were not yet known but work would be needed to maintain strong and supportive links with schools and governors;

She responded to the Panel's questions as follows;

- There was considerable concern regarding the recent large increase in demand for social care. The figures for May were double the number of contacts from the same month a year ago. The precise reasons for the increase were not known and a lot of work was being undertaken with partners to establish them. Contacts from the Police had gone up by 234% whilst those from schools had increased by 183%. Jon Abbey, Director of Children's Services, reported that similar increases had been experienced elsewhere and the work was focussing on getting a better understanding of demand. It was noted that referrals were often very complex in nature and required a range of interventions with families. A number were child protection referrals and had resulted in the need for care proceedings to be taken. A temporary additional team of social workers was being brought in to alleviate the pressure. It was hoped to have greater clarity on what action could be taken to alleviate demand by the next meeting of the Panel;
- Current data suggested that there was sufficient nursery provision within the borough to satisfy demand. Not all of it was necessarily in the right place though. This had resulted in some nurseries having places whilst others needed to have waiting lists. The market was being looked at to see what could be done to address this effectively;
- Work was being done by the Commissioning Team with partners in preparation for the introduction of the 30 hours free childcare offer for three and four year olds. This had included workshops with providers in order to find out more about the range of provision and what support was required. In addition, a survey on parental demand was currently being undertaken;
- In respect of refugee children, there was a rota for their allocation that was operated by Croydon Council on behalf of London boroughs. In addition, young people who presented within the borough became the responsibility of the Council. There were currently 26 unaccompanied children who were over the age of 15 who were being cared for, as well as 29 children who were being dealt with by the Leaving care team. Refugees came from a variety of countries including Afghanistan, Eritrea and Pakistan. No account was taken of the existence of local communities when allocating children to particular boroughs. There was a shortage of appropriate accommodation and it has been necessary for the Council to place children wherever suitable accommodation could be found. There were plans by the government to distribute refugee children more evenly across the whole of the UK;
- When refugee children reached the age of 18, if they were granted leave to remain from the Home Office they were entitled to leaving care services. If

they were in employment, education or training, they were supported until the age of 25. If they were not, they were supported until the age of 21. If leave to remain had been granted up to the age of 18, assistance would be given by the service to the young person in their application to the Home Office to secure their status;

- Home Office legislation took priority over the terms of the Children Act. The new Immigration Act made it clear that local authorities would be breaking the law if they continued to support individuals who had not been allowed to stay. It was agreed that a recent report on immigration issues for looked after children that had been submitted to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee would be circulated to Panel Members.
- Refugee children general needed a range of services, including ones relating to care, accommodation and education. They did not necessarily have specific additional needs. However, if they had been exposed to trauma, this could take time to manifest itself. Trauma could be a specific issue in respect of Syrian refugees;
- Exam performance at Key Stage 4 for looked after children was in the top quartile for London boroughs and the top 10% for the country as a whole. However, the service was still very ambitious and wished to improve performance further. In particular, there would be a focus on improving attendance and the completion rates of personal education plans. It was agreed that the annual report of the Virtual School, who provided educational support to looked after children, would be circulated to Panel Members.
- All secondary schools in Tottenham were rated by OFSTED as being either good or outstanding. Haringey 6th Form Centre had recently been inspected by OFSTED and rated as good. There was a new principal at the Centre and there was confidence that the improvement would be maintained. The College of North East London (CoNEL) had also been rated as good by OFSTED and provided a range of courses. They were currently aiming to promote an increase in apprenticeships. Tottenham University Technical College (UTC) was to close in October 2017 and was not taking any new students but would continue to teach a small cohort of young people who were currently there. As the result of a partnership between Tottenham Hotspur and Highgate School, it was proposed that a new 6th Form would be developed called the London Academy of Excellence (Tottenham). This was currently being consulted upon and had the support of the Department for Education. It was intended that it would emphasise academic excellence and serve the immediate area around Tottenham, with at least 50% of places reserved for local young people. The decision to seek to establish the Academy was taken by Tottenham Hotspur and Highgate School and the authority had no control over this process. It was noted that all post 16 provision was to some extent selective in nature.
- She was aware that a decision was taken in 2007 to focus 'A' Level provision in Tottenham at Haringey Sixth Form Centre. It would now be difficult for any current school in the area to expand into sixth form provision and she was not aware of any plans for them to do so. However, it would ultimately be a

decision for governing bodies to make. The Panel noted that the responsibility of the local authority was limited to ensuring that there were sufficient places, which there currently was. Schools were autonomous and local authorities had only very limited influence over them.

- Panel Members expressed concern at the current lack of 6th form provision in Tottenham and were of the view that, if necessary, the Council should exert what pressure it could on schools to remedy the situation. In answer to a question, the Director of Children's agreed to find out the exam performance at Key Stage 4 by young people who had transferred from the John Loughborough School to Park View Academy.
- In answer to the placement of looked after children, it was noted that efforts were made to place them within the Council's own fostering provision in the first instance and then through independent fostering agencies. However, some young people displayed very challenging behaviour or did not want to be placed in a family setting and in such circumstances residential accommodation could be considered. The service was dealing increasingly with children at risk of sexual exploitation or involvement with gangs and in such circumstances they could be placed away from London for their safety. Efforts were made to bring them back in due course but this was not always possible. Specialised provision for children and young people could also be outside of London. In addition, the Courts could remand young people to custody and place them in any secure setting that was available, irrespective of its location. The Council had no control over this but nevertheless was responsible for meeting the cost.

#### **AGREED:**

That the following be circulated to the Panel:

- (a). The Annual Report of the Haringey Virtual School;
- (b). The report on Immigration Issues for Looked After Children, which was submitted to the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee on 4 July 2016; and
- (c). Key Stage 4 performance statistics for those young people who transferred from the John Loughborough School to Park View Academy.

### **31. EARLY HELP AND PREVENTION SERVICE; PERFORMANCE UPDATE.**

Gareth Morgan, Head of Early Help and Prevention, reported that the Early Help Service was part of the Early Help Partnership, which was responsible for delivering the outcomes from the Early Help Strategy. The service was responsible for delivering Tier 2, non statutory family support for vulnerable children, young people and families in Haringey since October 2015. The service aimed to reduce demand into statutory and high cost services and develop wider community resilience. There were a number of opportunities that arose from partnership working, which included creating additional capacity, building local networks and aligning increasingly scarce resources amongst statutory and voluntary partners. There were also threats, especially arising from the funding model that was currently in place.

In the first six months of the operation of the service, it had supported 716 families. Of these, 175 had achieved sustained outcomes. There were currently 409 family cases that were open. 237 children and young people had been stepped down from statutory services and only 6 had been re-escalated into statutory service provision. This compared well with figures for re-referral into statutory provision for cases that had been closed but which had not received early help support.

The aim was to enable families to stand on their own two feet and engage with local networks to remain self sufficient. A locality model had been introduced and the teams were positioned in locations and covering areas based on a needs analysis that would allow them to have a roughly equal workload.

He responded to the Panel's questions as follows:

- The relationship with schools and childrens centres was developing quickly and positively. The service now supported children attending 92% of the borough's schools. There was also a dedicated worker who provided support to children and young people in alternative provision, such as the Tuition Centre, the Octagon and the London Boxing Academy. Each Children's Centre also had a named family support worker who visited at least twice per week for half a day.
- The Troubled Families initiative defined "vulnerable" as families having multiple needs. It was accepted that this was not a helpful or definitive term. There was no specific legal definition that the service was bound by but the service aimed to take a broad view of what it constituted.
- The funding for the service came from three sources;
  - The Council provided core funding, which constituted approximately 30%. This was the only source that the Council had direct control over;
  - £1.35 million from the schools block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG); and
  - The national Troubled Family programme. This was partly based on outcomes.
- The Youth and Participation Service was now a part of the Early Help service. A universal service was currently provided at Bruce Grove and Muswell Hill youth centres as well as some targeted interventions. A summer programme of activities at both centres was also being provided. In addition, youth engagement co-ordinators and youth practitioners were now part of locality teams. Funding for youth services had nevertheless been reduced significantly. Links with other providers of youth services were also being improved.
- Panel Members emphasised the importance of work with young people as a diversionary activity. Mr Morgan stated that, in addition to the services provided by the youth offer, there was also provision from community providers such as Mac-UK and Project 20/20. Efforts were also being made to extend the range of provision at Bruce Grove.
- Before families were stepped down, a reducing level of support was provided by Early Help to prepare the family to stand on their own two feet. This included ensuring they were linked into local universal provision. It was important to enable

improvements to be sustained. Contact was maintained with families so that they were able to address any issues that arose in order to help them keep on track and remain independent.

- The service worked holistically with the whole family and children were therefore always part of developing the family support plan. In addition, the service had also commissioned an inter-active tool called the “Outcome Star” that identified areas of concern in respect of children and young people, and enabled progress made by families to be evidenced.
- There were a number of factors that contributed towards the development of partnership working. This included the Early Help Partnership Board, which helped create buy-in by senior officers and assisted with the development of a strategic vision. The consistent offer provided by Early Help across the borough had allowed other services to identify opportunities to work alongside the service and align their boundaries with the Early Help. Support for young parents was also included within the partnership through the Family Nurse Partnership programme. There were areas that were being developed further including work to address Anti-Social Behaviour and improving links with the Police. Good progress was being made in developing links with schools and Children’s Centres though. There was evidence that that new approach was working and, in particular, that the locality model was helping to develop stronger local networks and build capacity that could ultimately reduce demand for statutory services.
- Family support workers provide a range of support including practical hands on assistance in the family home. For example, they could help families to attend GP appointments and assist parents with the setting of boundaries for children and young people. They could also help with signposting to services and provide advocacy and support to socially isolated families. A library of case studies was being developed which it was hoped to share. This would supplement the hard data that was produced.
- Gambling addiction was taken into account when assessing need as part of consideration of financial exclusion and was a vulnerability that the service was aware of.

**AGREED:**

That the progress made to date by the Early Help Service be noted.

**32. REVIEW ON DISPROPORTIONALITY WITHIN THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Gill Gibson, Assistant Director for Children’s Services (Quality Assurance, Early Help, and Prevention) reported that early help had a critical role in supporting children and young people who were at risk of becoming involved in the youth justice system. The ongoing Charlie Taylor review of the youth justice system meant that the whole policy area was under review but some work had already begun to respond to the issues highlighted in the earlier interim review report. There was to be a shift to a more proactive approach and early intervention would be at the heart of reforms.

Gareth Morgan, Head of Early Help and Prevention, reported there were a number of overlapping risk factors, including educational under achievement and substance misuse. The interventions that were most likely to be successful were those driven by early identification of young people at risk so that these could be dealt with by services in partnerships, for example, with schools. There was a need to support young people at high risk of exclusion and non attendance and work was being done with schools and other providers to improve the identification of the early signs. Targeted programmes were also being developed at the Bruce Grove youth centre. These were for both boys and girls and focussed on young people's good decision making and understanding risk.

Since 2009, Haringey Triage was the primary means of preventing entry into the youth justice system. Only 12% of those who went through Triage re-entered the Youth Justice system. The option of also offering those who went through Triage an early help package was being explored as one issue was the impact on younger siblings of an older brother or sister who had offended.

A lot of work had already been done to identify those at most risk of entering the youth justice system and high numbers of fixed term exclusions in year 9 and 10 was recognised as a significant risk factor. The Panel noted black boys who had been excluded often had very good school attendance records and officers were currently looking at the reasons behind this.

Jon Abbey, the Director of Children's Services, reported that OFSTED had been looking at this issue of under achievement of Black African Caribbean children and young people at key stages 2 to 4. They had come to Haringey as part of a fact finding visit to look at the gap in outcomes between Black African Caribbean and White pupils. These mirrored the social-economic differences between the east and the west of the borough. Schools and education provided an opportunity for successful interventions to take place with families. Key stage 3 was a particularly crucial time and Headteachers had been involved in discussions on how and why issues developed at this stage and the type of interventions that were undertaken by schools. One particular issue was the absence of key family members, which created a void. Both Northumberland Park and Gladesmore schools had mentoring programmes that worked with young people to address this. There were a number of factors that could contribute to issues at Key State 3 but there was unlikely to be a single action that would resolve them. However, schools already undertook a range of actions that could prevent problems escalating.

Mr Abbey stated that there was a view that the curriculum was narrowing and that this could have a negative affect on some young people as they were less able to see a career path that they could follow. It was essential to gain their imagination and motivation.

The Panel noted that white working class young people were specifically under achieving. One factor in the stark difference between the attainment of black Caribbean and white young people may have been the fact that a number of schools in the borough had entered young people into the International GCSE for English or Maths but this had impacted negatively on some of them. This issue had been fed



back to OFSTED. One other factor had been young people being entered early for exams and becoming de-motivated due to getting a low grade.

The Panel noted that, despite a drop of 60% in the number of young people who were incarcerated, the number of black and minority ethnic young people had remained the same.

In answer to a question, Mr Morgan commented that youth services had inevitably been reduced since last year following cuts to budgets. A consistent and strong service was now provided but this had to work within the available resources. Universal and targeted sessions were currently provided 5 days per week at Bruce Grove and on one day at Muswell Hill. Ongoing youth provision had been maintained and some families of young people with additional risk factors were being supported through the early help approach.

The Panel noted that 30% of families that were being worked with were white, 33.6 black African Caribbean, 5.35 Asian and 7.1% mixed heritage. The remaining percentage had not disclosed their ethnicity.

A Panel Member expressed concerns regarding the gangs matrix that was currently used within the justice system and which the new Mayor had pledged to review. He stated that he would be writing to the Cabinet Member for Communities regarding the issue. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families asked to be copied into relevant correspondence on the issue.

CHAIR: Councillor Kirsten Hearn

Signed by Chair .....

Date .....