

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THURSDAY 8TH MARCH 2018

PRESENT:

Councillors: Kirsten Hearn (Chair), Mark Blake, Toni Mallett, Liz Morris and Reg Rice

Co-opted Members: Luci Davin (Parent Governor representative) and Uzma Naseer (Parent Governor representative)

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

The Chair referred Members present to agenda item 1 on the agenda in respect of filming at the meeting and Members noted the information contained therein.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Elliott and Ms Denny.

3. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

5. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

6. MINUTES

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 18 December 2018 be approved.

7. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Jane Blakey, Head of School Performance, Standards and Provision, reported on test and examination results for 2017. These had been very positive. Almost every attainment and progress measure in all phases from Early Years to Key Stage 5 (KS5) had shown progress that was at or above national averages. Most showed the best results for the borough to date and, in particular, the achievement of disadvantaged

pupils was a key strength. Results for science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) subjects were particularly good and above national levels. An increasing percentage of young people were going to university and there had been a big increase in those taking up apprenticeships. Haringey was also now out performing national averages in most, if not all, areas.

There were nevertheless a few small areas where results had not been as positive:

- Key Stage 4 results for vocational subjects had not been as good as had been expected. It was felt that this was due in part to the introduction of a written examination.
- Results from the College of North East London (CoNEL) had not been as strong as those of school sixth forms. However, performance at Haringey 6th Form Centre had improved;
- There was still also some work to be done to bring schools in the east of the borough up to the same levels as those in west. In addition, the attainment gap for Turkish and Black Caribbean pupils needed to be narrowed further. Work was being undertaken by schools to identify those young people who were at risk at underperformance at an earlier in order to provide them with greater support.

In answer to questions, she stated that performance by girls within the borough was very good and better than that of boys. However, take up of STEM subjects could be improved upon. No specific consideration had been given to the performance of LGBT pupils. In terms of Turkish young people, classes could be arranged if there was a need for assistance with English language. However, take up of English as an additional language (EAL) was not good. The under performance if Turkish pupils could also be due to issues relating to application and parental aspiration. Councillor Weston, the Cabinet Member for Children reported that there was a BAME toolkit that could be used to address issues of underperformance.

The Panel noted that the BAME categories that were used were set by the Department for Education and depended on how parents defined themselves. Ms Blakely acknowledged that the categories were not perfect and, in particular, failed to record differences in performance levels amongst pupils of African origin. The Panel also noted that young people who were educated within the borough were performing better at post 16 than those who went outside. The post 16 offer was being looked at with aim of developing more collaboration between providers. There was a particular challenge in developing apprenticeships and encouraging greater take up.

The Panel noted that funding had been provided to support schools in preparing pupils for tests. Information from Pupil Premium lists and the Indices of Multiple Deprivation were used to target the schools that received specific assistance.

8. JOINT TARGETED AREA INSPECTION (JTAI)

Margaret Dennison, the Interim Director of Children's Services, reported on the outcome of the recent Joint Targeted Area Inspection. The inspection involved a range of inspectors looking at a particular issue with the intention of reaching a combined view on the work of partners. The inspection had focussed on abuse and neglect, which were very broad topics.

The approach used was strengths based and the outcomes would feed into the next inspection, which was likely to be later this year. The Director of Children's services would be developing an action plan in response to the issues raised. As part of the inspection process, it had been necessary to undertake a joint partnership audit of seven specific cases. Although this had been a time consuming process, it had proven to be helpful.

Ms Dennison reported that the feedback from inspectors had highlighted areas of strength as well as areas where improvements were felt necessary. A significant number of strengths had been identified and these had been well spread across areas of partnership activity. They included the fact that the borough had a multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH).

The inspection had also highlighted where it was felt that performance could be improved further. Amongst other areas, joint partnership decision making in the MASH, understanding and application of thresholds and the consideration of the historical context of families were raised. There were also a number of comments made regarding the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) including that it lacked sufficient strategic leadership. It was also felt that there was an over reliance of children's social care services and that Early Help was currently under developed.

Ms Dennison felt that critical comments in respect of Children's Services had been comparatively small and that there had been greater focus on the role of NHS bodies and the Police. An action plan to address the issues raised had been developed. There was an opportunity to address many of the issues raised through the new arrangements for safeguarding that would be implemented when LSCBs were abolished. The areas that had been prioritised as part of the new arrangements had now been endorsed by the Council's Cabinet.

In answer to a question, Sarah Alexander (Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Social Care) reported that LCSB training had been successful although it had not covered as many staff as was wished. The training had focused on parental behaviour as well as symptoms of neglect. She felt that there needed to be appropriate thresholds across the whole of the partnership. Ms Dennison commented that the new arrangements for safeguarding would provide an opportunity to look at thresholds again and make them clearer.

Councillor Weston, the Cabinet Member for Children, reported that a lot of work had been undertaken by the Council's Early Help service with schools to improve links with them. However, links needed to be developed further across all safeguarding partners.

In answer to a question, Ms Alexander reported that the new arrangements meant that statutory responsibility for safeguarding would no longer be solely the responsibility of the Council. Ms Dennison stated that relationships between partners needed constant attention. There also needed to be a willingness to challenge. She felt that the new arrangements provided a sounder basis for partnership work.

In answer to another question, Ms Alexander stated that each school was required to have a designated safeguarding lead. There was a safeguarding leads forum that

brought all of them together and who also had a role in providing training. She stated that there was a lot of data on how young people ended up in the care system and this was subject to regular analysis.

9. INSPECTION OF LOCAL AUTHORITY CHILDREN'S SERVICES (ILACS) FRAMEWORK;

Ms Dennison reported on the new ILACS process, which was a system for assessing the effectiveness of services and arrangements for children in need of help and protection. It was intended to be an annual conversation that looked at performance information and pathways. The process was meant to be more fluid than the previous inspection regime and included a strong emphasis on leadership. It included focussed visits to authorities. The new process had begun in January and the intention was to catch failing local authorities before they fell.

The Panel noted that Haringey was still categorised as requiring improvement and would therefore be inspected every three years. The last inspection had taken place in 2014 so the next one was now imminent. Inspectors would be looking at overall effectiveness and progress achieved. Ms Dennison stated that local authorities would not automatically be regarded as failures as long as there was an action plan to address any specific problem areas that had been raised.

10. REVIEW OF SUPPORT TO REFUGEE CHILDREN

The Panel considered draft recommendations for its review on support to children from refugee families. The Chair reported that there were limits to the level of support that could be given to some families and especially those with no recourse to public funds (NRPF). She felt that partnership was very important and particularly good relations with schools and the voluntary sector. A lot of the issues relating to NRPF families related to resolving their immigration status and delays had serious cost implications for local authorities.

Representatives of voluntary sector organisations with a role in supporting refugee families who were present at the meeting welcomed the work that the Panel had undertaken. They felt that it was important that there was a closer working relationship between the Council and the voluntary sector.

The Chair reported that the Panel had been concerned at the presence of a representative of the Home Office within the Council's NRPF team as it had received evidence that this could deter destitute people from seeking support. However, they had since noted that this arrangement had not been renewed. The Panel had also noted that the vast majority of children from NRPF families were allowed to remain in the UK when their status had finally been resolved. It was therefore felt that the manner in which such families were treated could have long term repercussions. It was felt that the voluntary sector should work together with the Panel to review progress of relevant services.

In answer to a question, Ms Alexander stated that there had been 44 fraud investigations relating to individuals claiming support from the NRPF team. In answer to another question, she stated that a practice review of the work of the team had

recently been completed. She was happy to share a copy of the executive summary of this with the Panel.

The Panel noted that a draft final report of the review would be circulated to Panel Members for comment before being submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 26 March for approval. Following this, it would be submitted to the Council's Cabinet, who would be asked to respond to the recommendations.

AGREED:

That the draft conclusions and recommendations of the review be approved and incorporated into a final report for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny.

11. REVIEW ON RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

The Panel considered draft conclusions and recommendations from the review. It was noted that there was a distinction between restorative justice and restorative practice. The former was a reactive process set up in response to a crime or conflict whilst the latter was proactive in nature and could be used to prevent conflict, build relationships and repair harm.

The Panel felt that more collaboration was required between schools. It was recognised though that it would be challenging to persuade all stakeholders to adopt restorative practices. The Cabinet Member commented that schools needed to be persuaded of the benefits of collaboration.

AGREED:

That the draft conclusions and recommendations of the review be approved and incorporated into a final report for submission to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

12. WORK PLAN UPDATE

AGREED:

That the completed workplan for the year be noted.

13. REFLECTIONS

The Panel reflected on its work in the previous year and throughout the period of the current administration. Before consideration of this, they noted the recent death of another young person from gun or knife crime within the borough, one of a number that had occurred within the last four years. A minutes silence was held for all the young people who had died, and in particular in memory of Kwabena Nelson, who had given evidence to the Panel in its review on disproportionality within the youth justice system.

Following this, Members made the following suggestions for how the work of the Panel could be enhanced in the future:

- Practitioners could be involved more in providing feedback to the Panel. In addition, community organisations could play a more active role;
- A greater emphasis on educational issues;
- More opportunities for the Panel to get out into the local community and engage directly with people and, in particular, young people; and
- Seeing how a service works on the ground by shadowing practitioners.

The Cabinet Member commented that the Panel could look at how opportunities arising from changes to legislation could be exploited. In addition, she felt that the apprenticeship levy and the implementation of the action plan arising from the JTAI would be useful issues for the Panel to focus on. She also felt that the Panel should not just focus on the role of the Children and Young People's Service and look in greater detail at the work of other stakeholders. In determining what issues to focus on, the Panel needed to be mindful of what areas it was in a position to influence. Shorter and more conversational pieces of work could also be considered.

AGREED:

That the above-mentioned comments and suggestions be incorporated into the work planning process for Overview and Scrutiny for 2018/19.

14. VOTE OF THANKS

It being the last meeting of the Panel for the current Municipal Year, the Chair was thanked by the Panel for his work as Chair. The Chair thanked Members and officers for their kind assistance and co-operation.

CHAIR: Councillor Kirsten Hearn

Signed by Chair

Date