

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THURSDAY, 8TH NOVEMBER, 2018, 7.00 - 8.40 pm

PRESENT:

Councillors: Mahir Demir (Chair), Tammy Palmer, Dana Carlin, James Chiriyankandath, Julie Davies and Justin Hinchcliffe

12. 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'.

13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Dixon and Cllr Moyeed. Cllr Hinchcliffe was attending the meeting as a substitute for Cllr Dixon.

14. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

15. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

16. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

17. MINUTES

In relation to item 7 (Service Overview & Performance Update) of the minutes of the previous meeting, Cllr Davies asked about unusual patterns in the recent SATs results. Eveleen Riordan, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning said that some initial analysis had been done and discussions were ongoing with the Haringey Education Partnership which will be prioritising schools where there are concerns. Asked whether there was a report about the school that had its SATs results annulled,

Eveleen Riordan said that the Harris Federation had commissioned an independent inquiry. The Council would ask the Harris Federation to share their findings. **(ACTION – Eveleen Riordan)**

AGREED: That the minutes of the Children & Young People’s Scrutiny Panel meeting held on 6th September 2018 be approved as an accurate record.

18. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Cllr Elin Weston, Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Families, responded to questions on the following issues:

- With regards to reported financial difficulties at the Octagon AP Academy, Haringey Council’s current contract with the Octagon is due to end in August 2019 and so a review of how that contract has performed and options for the future is already underway, though this is not due to any specific concerns. This review was expected to be completed rapidly and officers have liaising with the new head of the Octagon, Connery Wiltshire. The Panel recommended that the Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Families should write to the TBAP Multi-Academy Trust expressing concerns about possible disruption to the education of pupils and a willingness of the local authority to explore taking provision of the services back in-house if TBAP is unable to provide adequate services themselves. Cllr Weston agreed to write a letter on this basis and also suggested that she provide the Panel with an update on the contract review in February 2019.
- That no update regarding the Ofsted inspection was available but the report was expected to be published in the first half of December.

AGREED: That Cllr Weston should write to TBAP Multi-Academy Trust on the terms outlined above and provide an update on the contract review to the Panel in February 2019.

19. PRIORITY 1 BUDGET POSITION (QUARTER 1 2018/19)

Paul Durrant, Senior Business Partner, introduced the report on the budget position for Priority 1 of the Corporate Plan for Quarter 1 of 2018/19. On the Revenue Budget there was a projected overspend of just under £4.9m. The largest cause of this was on Safeguarding and Social Care where there was a projected overspend of £3.6m. Of this:

- £2.3m was attributed to Local After Children (LAC) External Placements. Although the overall number of children in care had not risen, the number of high cost placements had gone up. Pressures on the budget to make savings had also been a contributory factor.
- £0.8m was attributed to The Young Adult Service, mainly due to the new duty on local authorities to support care leavers up to the age of 25 rather than 21.

- £0.6m was due to the use of agency staff which are generally more expensive than permanent employees.
- £0.4m was due to costs associated with No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) cases.
- There was one area of underspend, forecast to be £0.4m, due to lower than expected numbers of in-house foster carers.

The next most significant cause was on Prevention and Early Intervention where there was a projected overspend of £1.2m. Of this:

- £0.2m was attributed to Children Centres as the service has been unable to achieve the income generation through fees that had been expected.
- £0.6m was attributed to the Special Education Needs Service, mainly due to the statutory duty to provide transport for those over 19 years old.
- £0.3m was attributed to the Family Support service, mainly due to an increase in demand for respite.
- £0.2m was attributed to the Inclusion Service, mainly due to an unachievable savings target.

In response to questions from the Panel, Cllr Weston, Sarah Alexander, Ann Graham and Paul Durrant said:

- While the agency staff rate was higher than was desirable, Haringey was not unique in this respect as it is a national issue and some boroughs have higher rates. A lot of work had been done with Haringey's recruitment partners, Hays, to try and improve recruitment and retention. However, some people are choosing to use agencies as a method of working. Also, some positions are hard to recruit to and are particularly affected by caseload levels. Officers are doing what they can to make Haringey an attractive place to work and to persuade agency staff to become permanent members of staff, including through golden handshakes, but there was more that could be done such as raising the quality of practice.
- On the External Placements budget, there were a total of 40 young people in residential care at present with a range of placements used across the country, sometimes because specialist support is required which is only available in certain areas and sometimes because of safety concerns. However, the Council tries to keep children within the M25 area where possible. The average weekly cost of residential care placements for children was currently estimated to be £3,500.
- In relation to the overall overspend in Children's Services, Haringey is not an outlier as there are similar, if not larger, overspends elsewhere as there are national factors at play. The LGA had predicted a national deficit of £2bn from what Children's Services need and what was being provided by the government and a recent BBC report had indicated that demands on Children's Services had increased by 78% over the past 10 years.
- Asked about the current number of NRPF cases and the precise budget figures on this, further details would be provided to the panel in writing (**ACTION: Sarah Alexander and Paul Durrant**). Cllr Carlin said that she understood that

there was no longer a Home Office member of staff within the NRPF which she welcomed.

- That there is a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with other local authorities that Haringey is a signatory to which agrees not to pay agency staff over a certain rate.
- On the application for funding to the Young Londoners Fund no announcement had yet been made.
- The cost of transport (for the Special Educational Needs service) was complex as costs vary according to where placements are and the length of routes that were therefore commissioned. Other factors included the recently expanded age range and that a local transport provider had recently gone bust. Efforts were being made to keep expenditure in this area down but the overall cost had increased.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

20. HARINGEY LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD: THE TRANSITION TO NEW SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Sarah Alexander, Assistant Director for Safeguarding and Social Care, introduced the report on the Haringey Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) which is the multi-agency partnership board that looks at safeguarding at a strategic level. New arrangements for the LSCB were being implemented on the basis of the new Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 guidance. The new guidance incorporated recommendations from the 2016 Alan Wood Review which had concluded that there were deficiencies in the LSCB system. The new arrangements will involve three statutory safeguarding partners – the CCG, the Borough Commander and the local authority. The statutory partners are required to set out their local arrangements by 29th September 2019 so a lot of transition work was ongoing to achieve this.

In response to questions from the panel, Sarah Alexander and Ann Graham, Director of Children's Services, said that:

- the Council will be an equal partner with the other two statutory partners under the new arrangements, so accountability is moving from the Council alone to a shared responsibility.
- arrangements for the Designated Officer (previously known as the Local Authority Designated Officer or 'LADO') will remain the same and stay within the local authority.
- the new partnership will have to set out their arrangements for auditing.
- the day to day arrangements will not change during the transition period – the main changes are to the strategic approach which are aimed at improving accountability.

AGREED: That the report be noted.

21. JOINT TARGETED AREA INSPECTION (JTAI) ACTION PLAN - UPDATE

Sarah Alexander introduced the report on the December 2017 Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) the subject of which was the response of statutory safeguarding partners to children aged 7 to 15 who had been neglected. The inspectors provided a non-judgment inspection finding, highlighting areas where improvements could be made. Partners were then required to respond to the findings including through the publication of an action plan. This plan had led to improvements in areas such as the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and in training for partners.

Asked whether there was data on neglected children by ward, Sarah Alexander confirmed that neglect was a bigger issue in the east of the Borough. Ann Graham said that it may be possible to produce some data but it would most likely illustrate levels of poverty, which is closely related to neglect. **(ACTION POINT: Ann Graham/Sarah Alexander)**

AGREED: That the report be noted.

22. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

Dominic O'Brien, Principal Scrutiny Officer, set out the background of the Work Programme for the Panel which had been assembled following the 'Scrutiny Café' stakeholder event in September and included several possible scrutiny review projects and a number of one-off items for the panel meetings in 2018/19 and 2019/20.

After a short discussion the panel proposed to conduct their first scrutiny review on children with special education needs. This would be likely to examine the journey of getting help from the local authority including the assessment, diagnosis and services provided, including looking at blockages in the system and the support available for families going through the process. However, the full details of the terms of reference would be developed in discussions between the Chair and the panel scrutiny officer, in consultation with the other panel members.

The panel also proposed to carry out a scrutiny review on alternative provision.

AGREED: That scrutiny reviews on Special Educational Needs and on alternative provision be added to the panel's Work Programme.

23. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

24. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The next meetings of the Children & Young People's scrutiny panel are scheduled to take place on:

- 18th December 2018
- 4th February 2019
- 19th March 2019

CHAIR: Councillor Mahir Demir

Signed by Chair

Date