

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON TUESDAY 19TH MARCH 2019

PRESENT:

Councillors: Mahir Demir (Chair), Josh Dixon, Tammy Palmer, James Chiriyankandath, Julie Davies and Khaled Moyeed

Co-opted Members: Mark Chapman (Parent Governor representative), Yvonne Denny (Church representative) and Luci Davin (Parent Governor representative)

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

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

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Carlin.

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 4 February 2019 be approved.

7. TRANSITIONS PROJECT UPDATE

The Panel received an update on the Transitions project. It was noted that the project was intended to help better prepare young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities for adult life. John Everson, Assistant Director for Adults, reported that the project had made some real achievements but there were still challenges to

be met and further work would therefore be taking place to address them. The project had been a collaborative piece of work between the Children and Young People's and Adult Services.

The Panel noted that there had been a number of achievements by the project during the past year:

- A transitions protocol had been developed with NHS services to ensure joint working to plan progression to adulthood;
- Funding had been obtained from the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) to provide employment placements via my AFK for 27 people with disabilities;
- Agreement had been reached with NHS partners on an improved referral pathway for Continuing Health Care to ensure continuity of services for people that receive funding from NHS;
- Free mental health support had been secured for people aged 16 and above to access the Haringey Well-Being Network;
- Training had been provided for staff and partners to enhance their knowledge so that they were better able to signpost to community services. Training had also been provided for commissioning staff to assist them in understanding user needs and negotiating the cost of care packages with providers;
- Work had taken place with children's mental health services to ensure improved referral routes to adult social care for assessments;
- The IT system had been updated to improve recording of transitions information for young people; and
- A monthly transitions co-production group had been established with families and staff.

There had been a number of achievements by the Transitions Reference Group through co-production, which included:

- An "Apps for Social Care" web page that was developed for service users to promote independence. A "Moving On" tool was also developed for young people to find disability well-being information more easily;
- Improved information and signposting on SEND issues, such as post 16 choices, colleges and employment, had been provided as well details of relevant adult social care websites; and
- Surveys had been undertaken to improve SEND information and a Transitions Pathway Guide published and widely distributed.

Parents and carers had been listened to and gaps in support identified. In particular, a need to improve housing and employment support had been identified. In respect of autism, the care packages provided for adults were not necessarily the best option for them. The outcomes that were being aimed for included a reduction in isolation, greater independence, promotion and maintenance of employment and better management of money. A range of further work was planned for 2019.

In answer to a question, Gill Gibson (Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention) reported that it was known that there was a "cliff edge" for young people when they reached the age of 18. It was one of the reasons why the work had been undertaken. One key aim was to provide information at a much earlier stage, including the range of

options available. The Panel noted that it was planned to produce an “easy read” version of the Transitions Pathway guide.

In answer to another question, Shana Nessa (Project Manager for Transformation) reported that copies of the Pathway guide would be sent to Special Educational Needs Co-ordinators to distribute to relevant young people. In answer to another question, Mr Everson reported that the relationship with the DWP in respect of the project was focussed on how improvements could be made to the process of getting people into work rather than the receipt of benefits.

In answer to a question regarding accessibility of information, Ms Gibson stated that further consideration could be given to this. An Autism Strategy was also currently being developed and would address some of these issues. The Panel noted that an assessment of carers was also undertaken when young people were assessed on transition into Adult Services. Mr Everson felt that further work might be needed on this area.

In answer to another question, Ms Gibson stated that many young people attended schools and colleges outside of the borough. They were supported in this through the provision of independent travel training. Good practice from elsewhere was considered in order to help develop care.

Ms Gibson reported that My AFK was a voluntary sector organisation. The programme in Haringey involved My AFK receiving referrals from a range of sources including self-referral. She agreed to consider further the feasibility of encouraging contractors working with the Council to provide placements for local young people. Mr Everson stated that the Council had bid successfully to the DWP and My AFK had been commissioned to deliver the work required. The Panel requested that they be provided with a briefing note clarifying the relationships involved in the contracts with the DWP and My AFK.

AGREED:

1. That a briefing note be provided to Members of both Panels on the contractual relationships between the Council, the DWP and My AFK in the project to support young people with learning difficulties into employment;
2. That relevant information on transitions, including the Pathway guide, be circulated to carers of young people including details of who to contact if they have any queries;
3. That consideration be given to the feasibility of encouraging contractors working with the Council to provide placements for local young people; and
4. That another joint meeting of the Children and Young People and Adults and Health Scrutiny Panels be arranged for six months' time to report on progress, particularly with employment initiatives.

8. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Councillor Elin Weston, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, reported on recent developments within her portfolio. She stated that the Council's action plan in response to the recent OFSTED inspection had been agreed by Cabinet in the previous week and had now been submitted to OFSTED. A report on progress with its implementation would be submitted to Cabinet on an annual basis. Two briefing sessions were also being arranged for all Councillors.

She was pleased to report that planning permission had been granted for a new school building at Earham School, which had been needed for some time. The funding for it had come from the Department for Education and there had been no cost to the Council. Construction of the new building was not expected to cause any disruption to the work of the school and no decant would be necessary. Work was also being undertaken to develop other capital schemes to improve school buildings.

In answer to a question regarding Coleridge School and the closure of part of its playground, Councillor Weston stated that she was not aware of this but would write to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors when she had more information. Eveleen Riordan, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning, reported that she was aware of the issue and work to remedy the situation was being prioritised.

In respect of tackling childhood obesity, the Council's Public Health Service had a Healthy Schools programme and she was happy to provide a written update on the progress of this. In addition, two schools in the borough had been selected as Super Zones, which was a project to improve the environment around schools. A number of schools had also begun the Daily Mile initiative. In addition, the Mayor of London had banned the advertising of junk food on the transport network and Haringey had now become the first London borough to mirror this on the advertising sites that it owned. The ban also covered advertisements that presented an unhealthy body image. She suggested that the Panel may wish to make childhood obesity an agenda item for a future meeting of the Panel.

In answer to a question regarding improving access to Russell Group universities, the Cabinet Member stated that she was very happy to look at action that had been taken in Newham and, in particular, support provided to young people. There was not only one route to success though and support also needed to be made available for those who wished to take a different path, such as an apprenticeship. Attainment meant different things to different groups of young people.

In respect of the financial deficit at Duke's Aldridge Academy, the Cabinet Member reported the issue was a concern but was due, in a large part, to the funding formula for schools not keeping pace with inflation. In addition, income fell when the number of pupils on school rolls fell. Audits of schools were undertaken every year and training was offered to governors.

In answer to a question regarding plans for education, these were outlined in the Borough Plan and the strategic objectives of Haringey Education Partnerships. It was intended to work to ensure as many schools as possible were rated as outstanding and all were at least rated as good. Specific performance measures would be included in the new Plan. Ms Graham commented that it was an overall strategic plan for the borough to be achieved with partners.

AGREED:

That an item on action to address childhood obesity be added to the work plan for the Panel.

9. OFSTED INSPECTION - ACTION PLAN

Ms Graham stated that the report provided an overview of the actions that would be taken in response to the recent OFSTED inspection. A more detailed version of the plan had been sent off to OFSTED. There would be an annual engagement meeting with OFSTED to consider progress with the action plan. A self-evaluation process would be used to help inform this. The Council's self-evaluation had been found by OFSTED to be consistent with its own findings.

In respect of the progression to being rated good, the Cabinet Member reported that it was important that OFSTED's judgement had matched the Council's own assessment. This was because it showed that the Council knew its strengths and weaknesses and where further work was required. She was confident that the actions required would be achieved. She was not yet in a position to say when as this would need to be confirmed with OFSTED but that it was intended that progress would be fast paced.

Ms Graham commented that improvement would need to be multi-factorial. Consistency needed to be achieved in social work practice and this required staff to stay for a long time and for social workers to be well trained. There needed to be a reduced turnover in staff as there was a higher number of agency staff than she would like. However, this would not be easy to achieve. The service was nevertheless starting from a strong position. Staff were hugely committed and formed good relationships with young people. Further OFSTED inspections were expected, including ones on SEND and Youth Justice. Work with partners was essential in achieving improvement. In particular, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was very important. Good progress had been achieved since the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of last year.

In answer to another question regarding what good social work practice might look like, she stated that she wished all staff to have good connections with young people and families, to be able to identify risk and to always work to their optimum level. She also felt that staff should benchmark themselves against the best. She hoped that all staff who came to Haringey aimed to make a difference. Staff tended to be most strongly focussed on working for their manager and word of mouth was important in helping to promote working for Haringey. A peer review by the Local Government Association had commented on how Haringey was viewed as a nice place to work and there was a need to make it as attractive a place to work as possible.

The Cabinet Member commented that it was important to discuss these issues in a balanced way, to acknowledge when improvements were required and to celebrate successes. Members had a key part to play in their role as corporate parents.

AGREED:

That a report on progress with the implementation of the action plan be submitted to the Panel in six months time.

10. REVIEW ON CHILD FRIENDLY HARINGEY: UPDATE ON IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS

Ms Gibson reported that a lot had changed since the review report had been drafted. It had been recommended by the Panel that Haringey define itself as a “child friendly” borough but it had been decided in the response that to not proceed with this. However, many of the “child friendly” priorities had been incorporated into the new Corporate Plan. The consideration of child impact assessment within all policy reports had been partially agreed and would need to be finalised in consultation with Democratic Services. In the meantime, all relevant policies now needed to be signed off by the Director of Children’s Services.

In respect of the voice of the child, a participation policy had been agreed in 2018. It was also an integral part of the Signs of Safety safeguarding approach that was used. The Council’s Youth Council had been re-established and had made mental health, youth crime and exclusions its three top priorities for 2019. There had been progress with a number of the priorities referred to within the review including the Haringey Community Gold project, a £250k programme of summer activities and the mental health trailblazer programme in schools.

In answer to a question, she stated that there was a bi-annual survey of children and young people in the borough that was undertaken by Public Health and focussed on health and well-being. The last one had taken place in 2018. It was agreed that information on the outcome of this would be circulated to Panel Members.

In answer to another question, she stated that the proposal to become a UNICEF Child Rights Partner had not been agreed due to the supporting infrastructure that would have been required. The issue could nevertheless be re-visited.

AGREED:

That information on the outcome of the bi-annual survey undertaken by Public Health on the health and well being of children and young people within the borough be circulated to the Panel.

11. SERVICES TO SCHOOLS AND HARINGEY EDUCATION PARTNERSHIP

Eveleen Riordan, Assistant Director for Schools and Learning, reported that a range of support services for schools, including school improvement and governor services, were now provided by Haringey Education Partnership (HEP). It had zero budget and gained its income through trading with schools. It operated in a competitive market which had been affected by schools being under significant financial pressure at the moment. HEP had been set up last year after consultation with stakeholders and was a schools led model. Funding for the services now provided by HEP would have ceased had it not been set up. All schools had been supportive. She believed that HEP was able to provide an improved offer at a lower cost to schools. The Children and Young People’s Service worked very closely with HEP. Key performance

indicators were being developed. In answer to a question, she stated that success would be regarded as all schools being rated as outstanding with excellent outcomes for children and young people.

Panel Members felt that the new service needed to be subject to local accountability. In addition, it was felt that schools also needed to be held accountable. Ms Riordan felt that the new service needed to be given time and was likely to be in a better position at the end of the year. HEP would be accountable for its performance to both the schools and the Council.

In answer to a question, Ms Riordan stated that a response would be made on behalf of the Council to the government's consultation regarding the inspection framework and agreed to circulate this to the Panel when it had been completed. HEP would also be responding and schools would also be encouraged to do so.

In answer to other questions, she stated that a response had been made to a recent government consultation on sex education and agreed to share this with the Panel. She also stated that she would come back to the Panel on what would happen should HEP become insolvent.

AGREED:

1. That the responses by the Council to the OFSTED consultation regarding the education inspection framework and the recent government consultation on sex education be circulated to the Panel; and
2. That the Assistant Director of Schools and Learning be requested to provide further information to the Panel on what would happen in the eventuality of Haringey Education Partnership becoming insolvent.

12. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

AGREED:

That the work plan for the Panel be noted.

CHAIR: Councillor Mahir Demir

Signed by Chair

Date