



Haringey Council

Agenda item:

[No.]

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

On

Report Title: Scrutiny Review of Corporate Parenting

Report of: Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Contact Officer : Robert Mack, Principal Scrutiny Support Officer Tel: 0208 489 2921

Wards(s) affected: All

Report for: **N/A**

1. Purpose of the report (That is, the decision required)

- 1.1. To approve the draft scope, terms of reference and work plan for the scrutiny review on corporate parenting.

2. Introduction by Cabinet Member (if necessary)

- 2.1. N/A

3. State link(s) with Council Plan Priorities and actions and/or other Strategies:

- 3.1. Council Plan: A thriving Haringey and a caring Haringey

Sustainable Community Strategy outcome: Economic vitality and prosperity shared by all

4. Recommendations

- 4.1. That the scope, terms of reference and work plan for the review be approved.

5. Reason for recommendation(s)

- 5.1. Included within the body of the report.

<p>6. Other options considered</p> <p>6.1. Included within the body of the report.</p>
<p>7. Summary</p> <p>7.1 The Committee has commissioned a review into corporate parenting. The review is proposing to consider how the Council and its local partners work together to address the full range of needs of children and young people. It will therefore focus on the role and contribution of a range of services, as well as that played by elected Members. It will aim to receive input from a wide range of sources including children and young people in care and those who have recently left care.</p>
<p>8. Chief Financial Officer Comments</p> <p>8.1. The Chief Financial Officer has been consulted in the preparation of this report and comments that the recommendations do not give rise to any additional financial commitments.</p>
<p>9. Head of Legal Services Comments</p> <p>To follow</p>
<p>10. Head of Procurement Comments – [Required for Procurement Committee]</p> <p>10.1. N/A</p>
<p>11. Equalities & Community Cohesion Comments</p> <p>11.1. A disproportionate number of looked after children come from ethnic minority backgrounds, and research shows that looked after children grow into adults suffering disproportionately from social exclusion</p>
<p>12. Consultation</p> <p>12.1. Consultation will be an integral part of the review. The views of a wide range of stakeholders will be actively sought as well as current and past service users.</p>
<p>13. Service Financial Comments</p> <p>13.1. The cost of undertaking the scrutiny review is provided for in the budget for</p>

overview and scrutiny. In addition, value for money issues and any potential financial implications arising from the review will be considered in liaison with the service finance lead.

14. Use of appendices/tables and photographs

14.1. None

15. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

15.1. Background papers are as follows:

16. Report

Introduction

16.1 The term "corporate parent" is not one which has a formal legal definition. However, the term recognises that a local authority should have the same interest in the progress and attainments of children and young people in its care as a reasonable parent should have for their own children. The responsibility applies to the local authority *as a whole* and not just the Children and Young People's Services (C&YPS). For example, where children are in care via a court order, this states that they are in the care of Haringey Council and not merely C&YPS. It requires ownership and leadership at a senior level and includes a key role for elected Members. In addition, the needs of children in care cannot be met by a single agency alone and local Councils need to work closely with key partners.

Outcomes

16.2 *Every Child Matters* identified the five outcomes that are of most importance for young people. These are that they:

- should be healthy
- should be safe
- enjoy and achieve
- make a positive contribution to society
- achieve economic well-being.

16.3 The new coalition government will be replacing the five outcomes with the term 'to help children achieve more'. However, since it is not yet clear what the detail of their thinking is beneath this change in terminology, part of the outcome of this review should be to define the outcomes that Haringey Council wants to deliver for its looked after children.

16.4 Haringey Council believes that children in its care have a right to expect the same life opportunities and outcomes as other children. Nevertheless, they may experience disadvantage. Research indicates that they experience poorer

outcomes across a range of measures, including health and education. In 2008, only 14% of children in care achieved 5 A* - C GCSE grades compared to 65.3% of all children. Nearly 50% of children in care have a diagnosable mental health disorder compared to 10% in the general population. Figures for those in residential care are even higher.

16.5 Children in care face particular challenges when they leave care:

- Between a quarter and a third of rough sleepers have been looked after by local authorities as children
- Children who have been in care are two-and-a-half times more likely to become teenage parents.
- Young people who have been in care are disproportionately likely to become unemployed
- Young people who have been in care are disproportionately likely to end up in prison
- Twenty-six per cent of prisoners have been in care as children, compared with just two per cent of the total population

16.6 They may have missed opportunities and have little or no family support. There is an expectation that Councils should provide the support a good parent would give on housing, education, training and employment. This can make the difference between achieving independence and requiring long-term help. Whilst Councils have a statutory duty to keep in touch with care leavers until they are aged 21, (and beyond that if they are in education), parents normally remain in touch and offer help and advice to their children throughout their lifetime.

Performance

16.7 The National Indicator Set includes several performance indicators about children in care. Three specific targets are included within Haringey's Local Area Agreement. These relate to education, which is particularly important in improving the life chances of children in care:

- NI 99; Looked after children reaching level 4 in English at Key Stage 2 – current performance 58.0% (target 47.0%).
- NI 100; Looked after children reaching level 4 in mathematics at Key Stage 2 – current performance 63% (target 48.0%)
- NI 101; Looked after children achieving 5 A*- C GCSEs (or equivalent) at Key Stage 4 (including English and mathematics) – current performance 17.5% (target 11%)

16.8 In addition, the council completes a detailed annual return on looked-after children. Key information should include:

- Personal education plans (PEPs)
- School absenteeism
- Exclusions
- SAT scores

- The qualifications that looked-after children are achieving.

16.9 Educational performance of children in care should also be measured against those of other children in the area and statistical neighbours. This review will also assess the educational performance of Haringey's looked after children and measure /compare these statistics against other children in Haringey, and also looked after children living in comparable boroughs.

16.10 Although education is very important, children in care have a range of other needs. For example, many children in care also experience poor health outcomes. They must:

- Be registered with a GP
- Have their immunisations up to date
- Receive a regular health assessment and dental checks.

16.11 They also have a right to expect the same leisure opportunities as other children and to take part in out of school activities.

Scope of Review

16.12 The Council has in place a Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee which focuses specifically on the work of C&YPS and the Children and Families business unit. The Committee is chaired by the Lead Member for Children's Services and provides detailed and regular feedback on services by C&YPS. It is proposed that this scrutiny review has a wider focus than this and considers the contribution of other parts of the Council and the local public sector as a whole.

16.13 It is proposed that the review focus on how the full range of needs of children and young people are addressed and look in depth at the contribution of a range of services provided by the Council and its partners to the parenting of children in care including:

- Housing
- Leisure
- Adults
- Health

16.14 In addition, the review will also look at the role played by Councillors and school governors. The corporate parental responsibility applies to *all* Councillors and it is proposed that the review look at the work that is undertaken to promote their involvement.

16.15 One additional factor to be specifically considered will be how the impact of reduced resources can be mitigated and how, as budgets across the public sector shrink, vulnerable groups like children in care and care leavers be protected.

Terms of Reference:

16.16 It is proposed that the terms of reference be as follows:

“To consider how well the full range of parental needs of looked after children and young people are addressed corporately by the Council and to make recommendations on how this role could be strengthened”

Sources of Evidence:

16.17 Suggested sources of evidence for the review are as follows:

- Research documentation, national guidance and targets
- Statistical evidence including relevant performance data and information on outcomes
- Comparison with other areas such as statistical neighbours
- Interviews with a range of stakeholders
- The views of children currently in care, and of those who have previously been looked after children.
- Some original research tracking the post care experience of an agreed selection of looked after Haringey children

Key Stakeholders:

16.18 These are as follows:

Council Services:

- Debbie Haith – Children and Young People’s Services
- Children in Care service including the After Care service
- Adult, Culture and Community Services
- Strategic and Community Housing Services
- Regeneration

Partners:

- NHS Haringey
- Job Centre Plus

The Cabinet:

- Cllr Lorna Reith – Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Voluntary Organisations:

- Haringey Foster Carers Association

Others:

- Children currently and previously in care
- Haringey Councillors

Consultation/Service User Involvement

- 16.19 The work of the Panel would be enhanced by input from children and young people in care. Opportunities will therefore be created to receive the views of young adults on the challenges that they face after leaving care and children currently being looked after on the expectations that they have of their "Corporate Parents". These could both be arranged through C&YPS.

Membership of Panel:

- Councillors: Ejiofor (Chair) Alexander, Gibson and Solomon
- Co-opted Members (voting): Yvonne Denny, Marcelle Jemide, Sarah Marsh and Sandra Young

Co-opted Members

- 16.20 As the work of the Panel will cover issues concerned with education, the Panel is required to include all of the statutory education co-optees from the Overview and Scrutiny Committee i.e. church and parent governor representatives.
- 16.21 In addition, the Panel may wish to consider the co-option of an appropriate person or people. Whilst there are no specific criteria for the appointment of such a person, it is suggested that this be a local person with specific knowledge and/or expertise of the issue in question. In addition, they should be independent of any relevant partners. The co-option would be on a non voting basis and would require the formal approval of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. It is proposed that two young people from C&YPS's Leaving Care Review Panel will be co-opted on this basis.

Timescale

- 16.22 It is proposed that the Review Panel aims to finish its work by the middle of February 2011.

Evidence Sessions

- 16.23 As follows:

Meeting 1:

Proposed Date: 14 September 2010

Aim:

- To obtain an overview of corporate parenting and the role of the local authority and how this role is promoted across the Council and amongst elected Members
- To consider the forthcoming challenges facing provision for children in care
- To receive relevant performance and other statistical data

Background Information:

Performance and other statistical data

Possible Witnesses:

Debbie Haith – Children and Young People's Service

Meeting 2:

Proposed Date: TBA

Aim:

To obtain a first hand perspective of the range of challenges that face children and young people in care and leaving care.

Background Information:

Possible Witnesses:

Children and young people in care

A young person who has/have recently left care

Meeting 3:

Proposed Date: TBA

Aim:

To obtain the views of foster carers on the range needs of children in care and how they are addressed.

Background Information:

Possible Witnesses:

Haringey Foster Carers Association

Meeting 4:

Proposed Date: TBA

Aim:

To obtain information on how a range of Council services and partners address the needs of children in care and work with the C&YPS

Background Information:

Possible Witnesses:

Adults, Culture and Community Services

Strategic and Community Housing Services

NHS Haringey

Meeting 5:

Proposed Date:

Aim:

To consider how children in care are supported in finding employment and training opportunities.

Background Information:

Possible Witnesses:

Job Centre Plus
Regeneration

Meeting 6:

Proposed Date: TBA

Aim:

- To obtain any further information that may be required from C&YPS relating to evidence received in the course of the review
- To agree appropriate conclusions and recommendations for the review.

Background Information:

An issues paper summarising all the evidence received by the review and highlighting key issues will be produced.

Possible Witnesses:

Debbie Haith – C&YPS