

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL  
THURSDAY, 5 DECEMBER 2013**

Councillors Brabazon, Bull, Christophides, Engert and Newton (Chair)

Co-opted Members: Ms Y. Denny (Church representative) and Mr E. Reid (Parent governor representative)

**CYPS90. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None.

**CYPS91. URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**CYPS92. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**CYPS93. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS**

None.

**CYPS94. SCRUTINY OF THE DRAFT MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN**

The Panel considered the budget documents as follows:

*Financial Outturn 2013/13 and Budget 2014/15:*

- *Revenue overspend on premature retirement cost and redundancies;* The Chair reported that this issue had been raised at the Panel meeting on 26 September and further details had been requested. Jon Abbey, Deputy Director of C&YP, reported that information in respect of this was still awaited. Historically, such commitments had been authorised without sufficient rigour but represented a commitment that was ongoing on the part of the Council. However, it was not possible to do much in respect of those commitments that had already been made. He agreed to find out about the position of academies in respect of this and report back to the Panel in due course on this and other relevant issues.
- *Underspend on Early Years;* The Panel requested further information regarding this.
- *Capital overspend on works to Rhodes Avenue School;* Mr Abbey reported that negotiations on this issue were still ongoing and in the hands of the Council's legal advisers. Panel Members were of the view that it was important that there was accountability for the money that had been spent and that it was important that there was greater ongoing challenge built into contract monitoring processes. The lessons that were learnt from this were likely to be important. Councillor Waters, the Cabinet Member for Children, reported that capital projects like this involved a level of complexity that

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made them a challenge to monitor and consideration needed to be given to how to ensure that there was accountability in such circumstances. The Panel were of the view that robust framework needed to be constructed for dealing with such capital projects and requested that proposals in relation to this be shared with them in due course.

*Appendix B – Savings Proposals:*

1. The Panel noted that this proposal involved integrating finance teams in Adults and C&YPS. It was hoped to provide leaner management and better process implementation. The savings would be made by deleting posts. However, impact on services would need to be monitored.
2. The Cabinet Member reported that briefings for all Members on Haringey 54000 would shortly be arranged.
3. It was noted that the posts in question had been vacant for at least two years and obligations in this area were now being met in a different way. Links with schools had been developed through representation on the Local Safeguarding Childrens Board (LSCB), the Schools Forum and the education interface within the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Schools could also access training through the LSCB. C&YPS had oversight of child protection issues within education but it was now schools that had direct responsibility.
6. The Cabinet Member reported that this proposal involved rationalising administrative support through smarter working and meant that it was possible to avoid reducing the number of social workers. Electronic systems had now been developed which required less administrative support.
7. It was noted that Public Health now had the main role in this area and agreed that this issue would be referred to the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel as it appeared to be more relevant to the policy areas covered by them.
8. Panel Members commented that this saving was contingent on the number of looked after children (LAC) reducing. Marion Wheeler, Assistant Direct of C&YPS, reported that the number of LAC had reduced and had been diminishing at the right pace. Adoptions had increased and the use of expensive and out of borough residential care placements minimised. Efforts were being made to keep children at home or in foster care, which were regarded as better settings in which to manage risk. Fostering was now administered through the North London Consortium. There were also national procedures and time targets which meant that the process was less influenced by post code. Time to adoption had gone down but could be distorted by children with complex needs and older children. The extension of foster care till the age of 21 would mean additional money would be provided for the borough and was a welcome improvement.

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10. The Panel noted that the procurement process linked to the fostering review was going ahead and young people would be given a role in determining the outcome. It was hoped that the new system would provide more local placements as well as more foster carers. It was agreed that Panel Members would be added to the distribution list for the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee. Panel Members noted that corporate procurement was within the terms of reference for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

*Financial Planning 2014/15 to 2016/17:*

*Dedicated Schools Budget;*

In response to a question, Wendy Sagar, the Interim Head of Finance, reported that the Schools Forum had a statutory role in respect of the formula for the budget for schools and made recommendations in respect of this direct to Cabinet. It was agreed that a briefing note would be circulated to Panel Members on the legal status of the Forum and whether their recommendations could be subject to scrutiny.

*Early Years Block;*

Ms Sagar reported that funding for this was now based on there being 90% take up. It was felt that by reducing the number of full time places whilst increasing part time places was likely to provide greater funding. Panel Members commented that the take up levels were lower in the east of the borough and this contributed to children having lower levels of attainment when they began school. The Cabinet Member reported that the Schools Forum was recommending that the hourly for the two-year-old early entitlement offer be increased to £6.00 per hour and that this recommendation was due to go to Cabinet in January. Other boroughs were currently paying a higher hourly rate than Haringey and there was a danger that insufficient providers would participate if the increase was not made. It was agreed to recommend that the hourly rate for providers of the two-year-old early entitlement offer be increased to £6.00 per hour.

The Panel noted that the introduction of free school meals for all pupils in reception to Year 2 would mean that some schools would have to extend their kitchen facilities. This was likely to have a greater impact in areas where there were lower numbers of children in receipt of free school meals. Panel Members commented on the importance of ensuring all those children entitled to free school meals were registered as this was very much in the interests of schools. It was noted that nutrition was being considered as part of the development of the new entitlement. It was agreed that a briefing on the issue would be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

*Growth Proposals*

Ms Sagar reported that the funding specified for the Haringey 5400 project in 2015/16 was a one off amount. Panel Members were of the view that the forthcoming briefing on the Haringey 54000 project should include details of the full cost of it, including the procurement process. The Cabinet Member reported that the initiative did not represent an outsourcing of services. The

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strategic partner would support services as they restructured and provide expertise and capacity that the Council did not currently have. She would make those who were providing the Member briefing aware of the issues that had been raised by the Panel.

*Additional Savings*

2. Panel Members requested further information on the provision of educational psychologists to schools and whether each school had access to one. Mr Abbey agreed to check the position and report back. It was noted that each school was provided with a statutory amount but academies had to fund provision themselves.

*Capital Programme*

Panel Members queried why no capital investments for C&YPS had been included. Ms Sagar reported that these were dependent on capital grants from the government which had not yet been announced. It was agreed that these would be referred to the appropriate Overview and Scrutiny body when they became available.

**AGREED:**

1. That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel on school related premature retirement costs and redundancies;
2. That the issue of the deletion of the 4YP nurse post be referred to the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel;
3. That Panel Members be placed on the distribution list for the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee;
4. That a briefing note explaining the statutory role of the Schools Forum be circulated to Panel Members;
5. That the Cabinet be recommended to approve an increase in the hourly rate for providers of the two-year-old early entitlement to £6.00 per hour;
6. That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel on plans to introduce free schools meals for reception to Year 2 children;
7. That details of the provision of educational psychologists to schools be circulated to Panel Members; and
8. That capital investment proposals for C&YPS be submitted to Overview and Scrutiny Committee when available and following the announcement of capital grant allocations by the government.

**CYPS95. WORK PLAN**

**AGREED:**

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That the work plan for the Panel for the remainder of the Municipal Year be approved.

**Cllr Martin Newton  
Chair**

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