

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL  
TUESDAY, 12 NOVEMBER 2013**

Councillors Brabazon, Bull, Engert and Newton (Chair)

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

**CYPS76. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Christophides.

**CYPS77. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**CYPS78. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS**

None.

**CYPS79. MINUTES**

In respect of the Professional Development Centre, the Panel noted that a feasibility study was being undertaken on its future. Although it had a limited future in its current role, the Centre was required to be used for educational purposes.

**AGREED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of 26 September be approved.

**CYPS80. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN**

The Chair stated that he was pleased that the Panel was to be involved in the overview of the Haringey 54000 project. He felt that Panel meetings should be built into key dates for the project. The Interim Director agreed that this would be done.

In respect of school expansions, the Cabinet Member reported that there needed to be sufficient space to expand. The issue was looked at each year and particular attention was given to where children were likely to need places. Both Stamford Hill and St Marys had bulge classes for Year 1 which had been necessary to accommodate the number of children who had moved into the area. Both of these schools had the necessary space to expand. Consideration was also currently being given to expanding St Marys and St James. There was a lack of additional space in other schools in the areas concerned. The Council was not able to build new schools and was relying on free schools to address the shortfall of places. Only good or outstanding schools were able to expand. If the expansion was to be permanent, a statutory consultation process was required.

The Chair raised the issue of the need for additional places in the Muswell Hill area due to housing developments in the area. The Cabinet Member reported that the feasibility of expanding Muswell Hill School had already been explored and was currently being re-examined. Whilst there would appear to be

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sufficient space, expansion on the site had nevertheless proven to be problematic.

In respect of church schools, the Panel noted that their admission arrangements differed from each other. Admission arrangements for them were likely to change as they grew and a process of negotiation would be required to ensure that arrangements were able to meet the needs of local communities.

Panel Members requested an update on the overspend incurred in the expansion of Rhodes Avenue school and efforts to recover this. It was agreed that this would be followed up and a briefing circulated to the Panel in due course.

Panel Members requested further information regarding the possibility of Technopark being used as the site for a free school. The Cabinet Member reported that the Council had not been a party to any negotiations that might have taken place. These would have taken place between the school and the Education Funding Agency. There was a clear need for additional school places. In the first instance, these would need to be at primary level but secondary places would also be needed in due course to accommodate the children concerned.

The Assistant Director of School Improvement reported on the process for delivering improvements to the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) which was currently in special measures. Various options were being explored. The most likely of these was a tri-borough model, with the unit having academy status. If the academy option was chosen, the local authority would have a role as sponsor.

In answer to a question, the Interim Director reported that issues relating to personal budgets for children with special educational needs would be addressed. Efforts were being made to set up a forum so that the experiences of service users could be shared. The service would also be able to learn from the experience of Adult Services with personal budgets.

### **AGREED:**

1. That Panel meetings be added to the key dates for the Haringey 54000 project; and
2. That an update on the overspend incurred in the expansion of Rhodes Avenue school and efforts to recover it be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

### **CYPS81. SAFEGUARDING UPDATE**

The Interim Director reported that the serious case review relating to Child T had been published by the Haringey Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LCSB) in October. The date of publication was at the discretion of the Chair of the LCSB. There were 50 to 70 children nationally who died from non accidental injuries each year and this number had not changed significantly in the last 20 years. There were also around 200 serious case reviews per year.

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These were all published unless it was not in the interests of surviving children. There was a serious case sub-group of the LCSB who were responsible for all serious case reviews. Reviews proceeded as soon as possible unless they were not able to do so due to ongoing investigations. The objectives of case reviews were to learn from the case in question and to reduce the likelihood of there being a re-occurrence.

The most recent review related to incidents that took place in 2010-11, when the service had been in the process of rebuilding. It was accepted that it could and should have intervened at an earlier stage. A number of reports had highlighted the improvements that had taken place in the last three years. In particular, management systems had been strengthened and this had been recognised by OFSTED. Performance had been addressed with a particular focus being taken on quality. However, it needed to be acknowledged that no local authority was able to guarantee that children in its area would not suffer any neglect. There was an overarching safeguarding action plan arising from the review and each agency had its own recommendations to follow up.

The Panel noted that there were two other serious reviews taking place in Haringey at the moment. It was agreed that the Panel would be informed of the dates that the reviews in question covered. The Assistant Head of Legal Services reported that there was statutory guidance regarding the processes that had to be followed. Reviews were confidential until publication. The Interim Director reported that a Member development session was to be arranged in January and this would cover the various processes that needed to be followed. The Panel noted that the Cabinet Member for Children attended the LCSB but as an observer. Membership was outlined in regulations and covered a wide range of professionals. It was agreed that the membership of the LCSB would be shared with the Panel.

Panel Members stated that criticisms had been made of Members in the past for not being aware of safeguarding issues and asked for reassurance that this was no longer the case. The Cabinet Member felt the Members were now in a better position to know of any potential issues that there might be in relation to safeguarding. She was, for example, informed routinely of the numbers of children missing from care, met regularly with front line social workers and senior officers and received a lot of information from the Children's Trust. Whilst she accepted that she did not know everything that happened within safeguarding, she felt she was sufficiently well informed to undertake her role effectively.

The Assistant Head of Legal Services reported that the responsibility for scrutiny of safeguarding lay with the Panel. The Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee was not a scrutiny body although it performed a questioning function. Its role was to advise the Cabinet Member for Children.

The Panel were of the view that, in order to assist it in undertaking its scrutiny role, the Chair of the LCSB should be invited to meet with the Panel twice per year to report on relevant issues and answer questions. It was agreed that a letter would be drafted from the Chair inviting the Chair of the LCSB to attend. It was proposed that relevant partners from the LCSB also be invited to Panel

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meetings looking at safeguarding issues. The Assistant Head of Legal Services stated that the LCSB was not a Council body and any invitation to the Chair would need to reflect this in its wording.

Panel Members commented that the Laming report stated that it was the job of Councillors to ask questions. As such, questioning needed to be welcomed and encouraged. If Members had not been concerned about recent cases, they would not be fulfilling their responsibilities. The two recent high profile cases that concerned Haringey had involved contrasting issues. In one case, disproportionate consideration had been given to the view of parents whilst in the other, the reverse was arguably true. The safeguarding role of the authority required complex information to be evaluated and difficult judgements made.

The Cabinet Member stated that judgements were the responsibility of individual social workers. It was essential that they were supported effectively through, amongst other things, reflective supervision. The Interim Director stated that supervision was taken very seriously and all staff should be receiving it. For new staff, this would be on a weekly basis. Action would be taken against any managers who were found not be providing supervision.

The Interim Director stated that there was a quality assurance process in place for safeguarding. This involved senior officers meeting with teams and going out on visits to clients. There was also a Quality Board to support this process but she wanted this to acquire a more dynamic role. There was no agenda for complacency. The Panel noted that 40-50 cases were audited every month. In addition, there were regular workshops arranged for staff. It was also necessary to have the right culture.

The Panel requested confirmation that information sharing protocols had been agreed with NHS partners. It was agreed that this would be verified and notified to Panel Members.

**AGREED:**

1. That the Panel be informed of the dates covered by the two serious case reviews currently taking place;
2. That the membership of the Haringey LCSB be shared with the Panel;
3. That the Chair of the Panel be requested to write to the Chair of Local Children's Safeguarding Board (LCSB) to invite him to attend future meetings of the Panel on a regular basis to report on current issues and answer questions and that partners represented on the LCSB also be invited to attend meetings where safeguarding issues are to be discussed; and
4. The confirmation be provided to Panel Members that information sharing protocols are in place with NHS partners.

**CYPS82. MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB (MASH) AND FIRST RESPONSE SERVICE INFORMATION SHARING**

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The Panel noted that the size of the sample used in the audit was determined by the external auditor. The areas that were covered in the action plan were those identified by the auditor as requiring action. The Panel requested a short briefing note summarising the findings of the auditor. The Chair stated that his preference was for reports to the Panel to be succinct and specific rather than re-submitted reports that had been made to other Council bodies.

**AGREED:**

That a short briefing note summarising the outcome of the audit be circulated to all Members of the Panel.

**CYPS83. HARINGEY FAMILIES FIRST (TROUBLED FAMILIES) UPDATE**

The Panel noted that an analysis of interventions that had successfully achieved outcomes required was being undertaken and requested that this be shared with them in due course. Confirmation was requested that people not in receipt of benefits were able to access support through the scheme.

Katherine Manchester, the Head of Service for Families First, reported that more referrals were being received from people moving into the area. The service was paid by the DCLG based on results and was hoping to submit a significant claim in January. Payment by the DCLG was upfront initially. Funding would reduce though if outcomes were not achieved. Although a claim had already been made for successful interventions in the case of 114 families, work was still continuing with them. It appeared that a full family approach was likely to be the most successful. The service was trying to embed an early help approach. Work was also being undertaken through the two-year-old early free entitlement scheme with Children's Centres and other providers.

The Panel noted that there was a map showing where the families that the scheme was working with were located. Whilst these were spread across the borough, the majority were in Noel Park, Tottenham Hale and White Hart Lane wards. The DCLG had asked local authorities to consider how they would further embed the programme should there be any extension of the scheme for an additional year. It was suggested that in order to engage families at an earlier stage, a focus on early years might be appropriate.

**AGREED:**

1. That confirmation be provided to Panel Members of the eligibility criteria for the programme; and
2. That a further report on the outcome of analysis of which interventions have been most successful in achieving outcomes be submitted to the Panel in due course.

**CYPS84. SUMMARY OF PUPIL PREMIUM 2012/13**

The Assistant Director for School Improvement reported that there was a need to determine the kind of interventions that were effective. It was nevertheless encouraging that the gap in attainment between children receiving free school

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meals and those not was narrowing in Haringey. Determining how to spend the money most effectively was a challenge for schools. Schools were spending the money in different ways with some using it to plug gaps in funding. However, schools were becoming increasingly accountable for the funding and delivering outcomes from it. There was also no guarantee that the funding would always be there.

The Panel noted that the recommendations within the report were intended to provide guidance to school leaders. It also noted that the eligibility criteria was being looked at by the government and, in particular, whether or not it should be linked to free school meals. The Panel were of the view that that the success of schools that facilitated improvements should be celebrated. They also highlighted that it was crucial for schools to ensure that children who were eligible registered for school meals.

**AGREED:**

1. That the recommendations within the report be endorsed; and
2. That a further report on progress be submitted to the Panel in due course.

**CYPS85. GIFTED AND TALENTED PUPILS IN HARINGEY**

The Panel noted that the outcome of the Russell Group Academy bid was likely to be known shortly. The Deputy Director (School Improvement) agreed to notify the Panel of the result. He reported that Haringey was lagging slightly behind other London authorities in terms of the percentage of pupils that went onto higher education and, in particular, the top universities. The bid was concerned with recognising talent and nurturing aspiration and aimed at addressing the aspirations of all Haringey children.

The Panel noted that the onus was now on schools to identify which pupils were gifted and talented and ensure that they were sufficiently extended to fulfil their potential. The Panel raised the issue of the link that had been established with Highgate School. Of particular relevance was the work that had been undertaken with Haringey schools on admission to Oxbridge. The Deputy Director agreed to report back on the further development of the relationship.

**AGREED:**

That a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel on progress with the partnership arrangement with Highgate School to provide extended services to local residents and schools.

**CYPS86. SCHOOL EXPANSIONS**

The Chair raised the issue of housing developments in the Muswell Hill area and the possibility of extending Muswell Hill School. The Head of Admissions stated that the service was aware of the new builds in the area and projections showed an increase in school age children in the area. However, Muswell Hill School was a challenging site. In terms of meeting demand, a number of issues needed to be factored in including demand and standards. A further

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report would be made to the Panel in due course on proposals to address demand. The Muswell Hill school site could be looked at again as part of this.

The Panel noted that there was a statutory requirement to consult on the proposed changes to the admission arrangements for St James School. This involved allocating 50% of places to the community and 50% on faith grounds.

The Head of School Admissions reported that a new two-form entry free school run by Harris was due to open in 2014 although it was currently unclear whether they had yet been able to identify a suitable site. In addition, the Hartsbrook School would also be opening. The additional school places that were currently planned would be enough to meet projected demand. The Panel were of the view that the Hartsbrook School was likely to be filled by a large number of children from Enfield. The Head of Admissions stated that the service were aware of the potential for this and had factored it into their projections.

**AGREED:**

That a further report be submitted to the Panel in due course on school expansions and, in particular, proposed measures to address the increased demand in the Muswell Hill area.

**CYPS87. SOCIAL WORK RESOURCING**

Panel Members asked for clarification of the reasons for social workers leaving the Council's employment. The Assistant Director for Safeguarding reported that the issue was being addressed by the Council's Human Resources department. It had only been possible to undertake a small number of exit interviews so far. The two that had taken place showed that the staff had left for personal reasons and to work closer to their home. The Council had to look at how effective it was as an employer. It was a difficult market at the moment with more jobs than people available. The challenge was particularly strong in London. It was important that the authority had the right systems in place to be effective in its recruitment and retention. The service was aiming to slow down the turnover of staff. The quality of what was offered to staff was important. In adaptation, the status of the profession needed to be raised. The Panel noted that one option that was being explored was the setting up of a job swap scheme.

The Panel noted that a review of fostering was being undertaken and there was a programme of work being developed to improve the service. The Panel requested that an update be submitted to a future meeting.

**AGREED:**

That an update on improvements to the fostering service be submitted to a future meeting of the Panel.

**CYPS88. ISSUES FROM AREA COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

None.

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**CYPS89.      WORK PLAN**

Noted.

**Cllr Martin Newton  
Chair**