

CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS (OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 25 FEBRUARY 2008)

FROM COUNCILLOR CATHERINE HARRIS:

QUESTION 1.

Can the LM outline how many long term free nursery places there will be at Noel Park Nursery for the year 2008-9?

Answer

Noel Park Primary School Nursery has a maximum of 52 FTE children places however, due to staffing levels, they are currently taking 39 FTE. They are charging £60 per week for 3-4 year olds.

Noel Park Children Centre provides childcare via New Age Services Ltd. There are 43 places. The charge is £190 per week for under two's, £ 180 per week for under 3's and £160 per week for under 4's.

There are no free places at either centre. Like most childcare settings the Noel Park childcare provision can provide Nursery Education Grant (NEG) funded sessions. Children aged 3 or 4 are entitled to a maximum of 5 free 2 1/2 hour NEG funded sessions per week.

The CYPS is currently undertaking a review of the borough's free places for children in need or those with disability. The purpose is to ensure the places are in the settings where the need is greatest whilst also making best use of the specialisms available in the different centres.

FROM COUNCILLOR ENGERT:

QUESTION 2.

Given that the third phase for the delivery of a Children's Centre in every community is now being planned, please can you give me your proposals for Fortis Green. This is especially important as this ward contains pockets of deprivation and the population of children is due to expand yet again with the completion of the Lynx depot, which contains several large family units of social housing. It is also noted that the large population in the North of the ward including Coldfall Estate, Osier Crescent and the soon to be Lynx Depot have no community facilities, which a Children's Centre could help to address.

Also I would be grateful for the other locations intended for Phase three Children's Centres.

Answer

We are committed to children's centre provision for Fortis Green. At present discussions are taking place with a number of parties and it would be premature to make a public announcement. I will arrange for the Opposition spokesperson on Children and Young People to be briefed on this and on

other initial proposals for phase 3. The final proposals will be brought to Cabinet.

QUESTION 3.

Aiming high for young people' the document published by the Government in July 2007 contains a pledge 'to improve youth facilities by investing in a place for young people to go in every constituency'. These are to be funded over the next three years from unclaimed assets and £60 million new investment from DCSF. Please can Cllr Santry tell me how much money will be available individually for the constituencies of both Hornsey and Wood Green and Tottenham for these facilities and how local residents (particularly young people themselves) and local councillors in the constituencies will be involved and fully consulted about how this money is spent.

Answer

It was announced in December 2007 that there was £3.1million funding for positive activities for young people in Haringey including the Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Fund.

Broad areas of spend for this funding have started to be identified in line with the government grant requirements which includes provision for "Places To Go".

Officers are currently working on the detail of the funding and on completion of this exercise I will be able to advise on availability in the constituencies of Hornsey and Wood Green and Tottenham.

Young people will be involved at all levels in the allocation of the funding. In particular the allocation of the Youth Opportunity Fund and Youth Capital fund will build on the success of the last 2 years with young people being responsible for the administration of the funding.

We are aiming to work with colleagues in Neighbourhood Management to ensure that local residents are fully involved in discussions about allocation of the funding. Councillors are very welcome to make suggestions.

FROM COUNCILLOR NEWTON:

QUESTION 4.

The Cabinet agreed on 18 September 2007 to accept a recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee that wi-fi systems in schools should only be switched on when needed. Can the Cabinet member therefore answer the following:

- Why have schools so far not been advised to switch off wi-fi systems when not in use?
- When does the Council intend to write to all schools informing them of this recommendation?

Answer

Following the Cabinet meeting on 18 September 2007, a letter was drafted to implement the two resolutions:

1. That, (apart from schools using wi-fi systems being asked to ensure that they are switched on only as necessary to reduce energy waste and costs) the recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny be not approved.
2. That the Director of the Children and Young People's Service write to all schools drawing attention to the current Department for Children, Schools and Families advice on this matter.

Unfortunately, due to a misunderstanding, the letter sent omitted the text relating to the condition in resolution 1. I am grateful to Cllr Newton for pointing this out and this has been rectified immediately.

The resolution was communicated to the CYPS ICT team, who provide support to most schools. They have routinely communicated the proposal to schools, as well as giving instructions on rebooting the network after switching off.

FROM COUNCILLOR BEVAN:

QUESTION 5.

Sprinkler systems in schools

I refer again to the question of fire sprinklers in schools. I understand that the government now expects all new and the majority of renovated schools to have such systems fitted. I also understand a standard specification for sprinkler systems has now been produced. In the light of these developments please may I be advised if Haringey will be installing fire sprinkler systems in its proposed new and renovated schools.

Answer

It is true that the government has expressed that view; however, it has not made available funding to match. Currently there is a contradiction in Government policy which may lead us to have to provide sprinklers but they do not regard this as eligible for BSF. The cost of sprinklers is about 2% of the capital cost and in the case of the new school this would be £550k.

The guidance requires that a risk analysis is undertaken by the design team and this is then considered in the light of value for money. This will be done in those cases affected by the guidance and the case discussed with PfS.

QUESTION 6.

John Loughborough secondary school

Please may I be advised as to when the above school was first noticed / concerns were first expressed concerning its failure to provide an acceptable standard of education to its pupils.

I understand that on the 31st August 2007 changes were made in the management and financing of this failing school. I understand that the Interim Executive Board (IEB) met for the first time in January 2008; please can I be advised as to why it was 5 months before the new arrangements came into effect. I understand the next Ofsted inspection is expected in February 2008. If this inspection indicates that this school is still failing to deliver for its pupils please may I be advised as to what the likely next actions that will be taken to ensure that its pupils do not continue to receive a failing education provision. I understand that in the academic year 2006 /2007 additional financing / resources to the sum of £176k were provided to assist in addressing the causes of this failure. Please may I be advised as to the total additional financing / resource costs anticipated for the academic year 2007 / 2008.

Please can I be assured that no individual or group interest will prevent or delay the overwhelming need to ensure that the pupils at this school receive an education that will prepare them to be successful and fulfilled in their adult life.

Answer

John Loughborough School has been very closely monitored over the last two years. The results in 2006 were not good and this led to a series of regular meetings between the director, deputy director, the chair of governors and the headteacher. The results announced on 24 August 2007 were again disappointing and the director withdrew the delegated authority on 31 August. The governing body was advised that the leadership and management of the school was inadequate. As a Voluntary Aided school the overall responsibility for personnel matters remained with the governors despite the withdrawal of delegation. During the early months of the new school year there was a lack of agreement within the governing body about the action that was required to drive school improvement. The director, once negotiations had failed with the governing body, made an application to the Secretary of State for an Interim Executive Board (IEB). This process required a period of consultation with the governing body. The governing body was not in favour of the IEB. The Secretary of State gave permission for the IEB to be formed just before the Christmas break and the IEB met promptly in the new year. The IEB has 12 monthly meetings planned with the intention to return the school to the governing body if it has been improved and is able to sustain further improvement without ongoing intervention.

The school is the lowest performing school in London and this decisive action is to ensure that substantial improvement is made as quickly as possible. The additional costs of intervention this year are approximately £205K. London Challenge has provided the majority of this funding (£175K) and the local

authority has put in approximately £30K of additional curriculum support. Clearly intervention at this level takes considerable amounts of senior staff time and this is not included in the the figure above .

The focus of this intervention is on improving the education and achievements of the young people in the school; we will not allow any other interest to stand in the way of ensuring this happens as quickly as possible.

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