

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL  
THURSDAY, 9 JULY 2015**

Councillors: M Blake, Hearn (Chair), Mallett, Rice and Wright

Co-optees: Ms Y. Denny (Church of England representative)

**CYPS1. FILMING AT MEETINGS**

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

**CYPS2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Morris and Mr Taye.

**CYPS3. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**CYPS4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**CYPS5. DEPUTATIONS/ PETITIONS/ PRESENTATIONS/ QUESTIONS**

None.

**CYPS6. MINUTES**

**AGREED:**

That the minutes of the meeting of 18 March 2015 be approved.

**CYPS7. TERMS OF REFERENCE - CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL**

**AGREED:**

That the terms of reference for the Panel be noted.

**CYPS8. CORPORATE PLAN, PRIORITY 1: BEST START IN LIFE**

James Page, the Head of Transformation and Strategy, Children and Young People's Service, reported that outcome measures and performance targets for the next three years were currently under development. The aim was that these would help to clarify what good looked like. Ambitious targets had been set and it was intended that progress against these would be measured in an open and transparent way. It was proposed that performance information would be published quarterly on the Council's website.

In answer to questions, the Panel noted that:

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- A well-being survey of children and young people had been commissioned from an organisation that had successfully undertaken similar work elsewhere;
- The distribution of services across the borough had been looked at. Locality based services were determined by levels of need. In particular, a detailed analysis of services had been undertaken in respect of early help;
- Health issues relating to migrant children were being considered as part of service re-design. The intention was to re-align services with localities and work on this was taking place with school nurses. The intention was to pick up issues at an earlier stage;
- Over 120 schools were now buying traded services from the Council. A wide range of services were traded and there were now also attracting schools from outside of the borough.
- The number of Looked After Children (LAC) had gone down in the last year. The focus of action was on good permanency planning so that young people had a greater level of stability. The service was also working to support young people better when they left care. In addition, consideration was also being given to the needs of those children and young people who were on the edge of care. The intention was to provide support at an earlier stage.

Councillor Mark Blake reported that there was a disproportionate number of young people from black and ethnic minority communities within the youth justice system and that a disproportionality toolkit had been developed by the Youth Justice Board to help local authorities address this. Gill Gibson, Assistant Director for the Children and Young People's Service, agreed to look into this issue and report back in due course. She reported that, as part of the service from October 15, there would be a team focussing on young people 'at risk' as part of a multi agency response and targeting a response to vulnerable groups. Recent analysis under the LSCB had, for example, identified that disabled children were over represented amongst those young people involved in gangs. The new structure aimed to have the responsiveness to deal with specific needs and issues. The aim was to intervene earlier and involve the whole of the family. It was intended to obtain good data on where any gaps might be and that this would inform the commissioning strategy.

Panel Members requested data on the percentage of LAC who were within the youth justice system. However, it was noted that young people who were remanded were automatically put into care.

Members of the Panel raised the issue of the consultation process for the re-organisation of children's centres, which had recently been launched. Councillor Waters, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, reported that the consultation would be running until 20 September. The process would involve a number of public meetings. Responses to the proposals could also be made on line. All Children's Centres had been informed of the consultation process and it was hoped that it would be possible to get good feedback from them. One particular issue that would be looked at was what could still be provided at locations that were no longer to be Children's Centres following the reorganisation.

The Chair requested assurance that Equalities Impact Assessments (EIAs) were being used as a tool by the Council. The Panel noted that EIAs were used where required and that there was now additional capacity within the Council's Policy Team to advise services on this issue and ensure that they were an integral part of change processes.

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#### **AGREED:**

1. That the Children and Young People's Service give consideration the use of the Youth Justice Board's disproportionality toolkit to monitor the percentage of black and ethnic minority young people within the youth justice system locally; and
2. That data be shared with the Panel on the percentage of LAC within the youth justice system.

#### **CYPS9. PANEL PROJECT ON YOUTH TRANSITION - INTERIM FINDINGS**

The Chair reported that the Panel had been disappointed that it had not been able to make more progress with the project. In particular, she thought that they had not necessarily received evidence from the right children and young people so far. Not all young people wished to go to university and a significant number were more interested in vocational options. Part of the evidence received appeared to suggest that some young people felt at a disadvantage coming from the local area. Many young people also went out of borough for post 16 education as they appeared to be of the view that there were more exciting opportunities elsewhere. It was intended that the further work by the Panel would examine these issues.

Panel Members expressed concern at developments within post 16 education within the borough. Both the Tottenham University Technical College (UTC) and Haringey 6<sup>th</sup> Form College appeared to be experiencing challenges in recruiting students. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families stated that she shared the concerns of the Panel regarding post 16 education in the east of the borough. The 6<sup>th</sup> Form College now had a new Principal who was committed to increasing its attractiveness to potential students. The UTC should be an attractive post 16 option for young people and efforts were being made to increase its visibility and profile. In addition, a national digital college was to be launched that would provide another option for local young people. Alternative options outside of the borough were not necessarily better than what was provided locally.

Panel Members stated that the work on this issue had to be considered within the context of the inequalities that existed within the borough. Haringey was one of the most unequal boroughs in London and, in particular, there were particular inequalities based on ethnicity. There was also an issue relating to travelling across the borough as there certain places where young people would not go due to rivalries based around post codes. Many schools in the east of the borough did not have 6<sup>th</sup> forms so provision was something that would need to be looked at, particularly as young people were now required to stay on until they were 18. It would be useful to find out what colleges outside of the borough were doing to attract students. Haringey did not necessarily need to compete directly but could instead focus on creating its own niche. For example, it could concentrate on vocational routes in areas where there were skills shortages.

In respect of the 6<sup>th</sup> Form College, the Cabinet Member reported that it had now become an academy. Work was taking place with it in order to bring about improvements. The college had been set up at a time when schools in the east of the borough were not performing well and the intention was that it would attract a sufficient number of students to make it a viable proposition. However, schools in the

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east were now performing very well but most still did not have 6<sup>th</sup> forms. In addition, a greater level of academic rigour was now often required in post 16 options.

The Panel noted that discussions had taken place between the Chair and officers from the Children and Young People's Service regarding how to take the work of the project forward. It was proposed that the following be undertaken:

- Visits to two local schools to hear how they provide impartial advice and guidance to young people and, in particular, those between the ages of 12 and 14. This could also provide an opportunity to raise the issues brought up by children and young people during the earlier consultations undertaken by the Panel;
- Comparisons with other local authorities. It was noted that work regarding this has taken place as part of the Post 16 Review undertaken by the Council's Corporate Delivery Unit; and
- A final evidence gathering session to which relevant officers in the Children and Young People's Service would be invited to update the Panel on work that is currently being done and recent developments.

#### **AGREED:**

1. That the preliminary findings of the Panel for the project, as outlined in the report, be approved; and
2. That the proposed programme of further work be approved.

#### **CYPS10. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE**

Panel Members were of the view that the prevention of radicalisation was an issue that warranted particular attention. It was noted that the Prevent programme was included within the list of potential community safety issues to be covered by the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Panel, under whose terms of reference it was included. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People reported that there was a lot of work that was being undertaken on this issue with schools and that an element of safeguarding was included within this. More staff were to be recruited to assist with the programme. Members of the Panel were of the view that there needed to be a balanced approach. Over reaction could lead to marginalising communities further. It was important that there was consultation with communities and that Muslim people were involved in the development of the programme.

In respect of the proposal to undertake in-depth work on early help, Gill Gibson, Assistant Director for Children and Young People, requested that this be scheduled after the other proposed project for the Panel, which it was proposed would focus on early years.

The Panel noted the responsibilities that overview and scrutiny had in many important areas and which had been highlighted in reports on the Rotherham and Mid Staffordshire scandals. Concern was expressed that the lack of staffing resources for scrutiny could preclude it from fulfilling these responsibilities adequately. It was noted that report would be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 July on the lessons from Rotherham. This would look at the implications of the Casey report

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into the issue and would have a cross Council focus. A programme of action would be recommended in response to it. The Local Safeguarding Children Board would be an important element within this and regular liaison with it would be included within the work plan.

The Panel noted that overview and scrutiny had assumed a greater level of responsibility for scrutinising safeguarding following the disestablishment of the Council's Children's Safeguarding Policy and Practice Advisory Committee in 2012. It was also noted that that all schools were required to have a safeguarding policy. The Chair felt that reassurance and clarity regarding safeguarding issues would be welcome, such as details of how schools deal with issues and suggested that a presentation to Members could assist with this.

It was noted that the Adults and Health Scrutiny Panel would be undertaking a major piece of work on obesity. The Children and Young People's Panel could nevertheless still look at the issue but it would not necessarily need to be examined in depth. The issue of school places was a matter of general concern and would be appropriate for a one-off item to provide assurance regarding planning processes. In terms of educational attainment performance, there was a lot of data available and school performance was generally good across the borough. One possibility for addressing this issue would be to invite two schools to come along to a Panel meeting and outline what they did to address performance.

Reference was made by the Panel to the fact that some primary schools were over subscribed and that there had been a number of large housing developments within the borough which were likely to increase the pressure on school places. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families reported that the Council was required to publish a school place planning report every year. London wide projections regarding potential demand for places were used within this. The most recent estimates showed a drop in the west of the borough. Projections took into account housing developments. There were more school places available than previously due to the presence of free schools and the overall position had improved since last year.

The Panel noted that the issue of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) was considered by the Adults and Health Panel during the last year as a piece of in-depth work. An update on the progress of this would be requested in due course by the Adults and Health Panel. Members of the Children and Young People's Panel would be welcome to attend the meeting of the Adults and Health Panel that considered this. It was also felt that fostering and adoption and gangs – possibly jointly with the Environment and Community Safety Panel - would be appropriate areas for future work by the Panel.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families reported that the Council's Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee had a key role in fostering and adoption and agreed that Panel Members would be put on the distribution list for it. The Chair stated that issues could be approached using a range of approaches, such as scrutiny in a day.

#### **AGREED:**

1. That, subject to the above-mentioned comments, the items outlined in Section 8 of the report be prioritised for inclusion in the 2015/16 work programme and

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recommended for endorsement by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 27 July 2015;

2. That, in respect of the items agreed for inclusion in the 2015/16 work programme, the Chair of the Panel meet with appropriate Cabinet Members and senior officers to clarify further the work programme; and
3. That Members of the Panel be added to the distribution list for the Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee.

**CYPS11. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS**

None.

**CYPS12. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- 8 October 2015; and
- 3 March 2016.

**Clr Kirsten Hearn**  
**Chair**