

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THURSDAY 29TH JUNE 2017

PRESENT:

Councillors: Kirsten Hearn (Chair), Mark Blake, Toni Mallett, Liz Morris, and Reg Rice

Co-opted Members: Luci Davin (Parent Governor representative) and Yvonne Denny (Church representative)

1. FILMING AT MEETINGS

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

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Elliott.

3. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

5. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

6. MINUTES

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 16 March 2017 be approved.

7. TERMS OF REFERENCE AND MEMBERSHIP

AGREED:

That the terms of reference, protocol for Overview and Scrutiny and policy areas/remits and membership for each scrutiny panel for 2017/18 be noted.

8. WORK PROGRAMME DEVELOPMENT 2017/18

The Panel considered potential issues for review, as part of the work plan for 2017/18. Panel Members felt that particular priority should be given to considering support provided for refugee children. This could look at a range of issues, including the following;

- Support for refugee children in schools, as well as for schools themselves;
- Trauma and mental health issues;
- What happens when refugee children reach the age of 18;
- Families with no recourse to public funds;
- How refugee children are placed within local authorities;
- How expertise and learning is shared; and
- Resource implications.

Jon Abbey, the Director of Children's Services, reported that Haringey was a part of the National Transfer Scheme and committed to meeting the threshold of 0.07% of the general children's population that it was expected to take as part of this. He felt that one resource implications were one area that the Panel could usefully focus upon, particularly in respect of grants and where shortfalls might be. The Panel noted that some children had fled from difficult circumstances and those that had suffered trauma were significantly more likely to become offenders.

The Panel also felt that restorative justice should also be given priority. In particular, it was felt that this could focus upon how it was used, particularly by schools, and its role in behaviour management. The Panel noted that the Willow School could provide a useful case study of the use of restorative justice in schools. Gill Gibson, Assistant Director for Early Help and Prevention, reported that all Youth Justice case workers were trained in restorative practice and the service was currently looking at how it could be used better.

AGREED:

1. That the issues of refugee children and restorative justice be prioritised for review within the work plan for 2017/18;
2. That, subject to the above, the areas proposed for prioritisation in the 2017/18 scrutiny work programme be approved and that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be asked to endorse them above at its meeting on 17 July 2017.

9. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Councillor Elin Weston, the Cabinet Member of Children and Families, reported on key developments within her portfolio. A review of support for care leavers was in the process of being completed. Work to establish a schools improvement trust was a priority and significant support with this was being provided by school head teachers in the borough. Work was also being undertaken with schools to address the impact of funding formula changes for them. Efforts were continuing to ensure that children's social care services were in good shape and were ready for any inspection by Ofsted.

In respect on cladding on tower blocks, the only issue that had been raised to date in relation to schools buildings was in respect of Brook House Primary School. Samples of cladding from the school building had been sent for testing and any issues arising

would be dealt with in light of advice from the Fire Brigade. Assistance had been provided by the Council to relief effort for Grenfell Tower residents and this had included the provision of two childrens social workers. An offer had also been made to provide two social workers for Camden Council to assist in the decanting of families from blocks to which remedial works were required.

She responded to questions from the Panel as follows;

- All schools were required to publish admissions criteria and applications were determined according to these. The majority of places were allocated on distance. Those that were not offered places at their preferred schools would be offered a place at the closest Haringey school which had a place available, and would be placed on a waiting list for their preferred schools. There was a right of appeal for those whose applications had been unsuccessful.

Panel Members raised concerned about the operation of appeals. The Cabinet Member agreed to raise the issue with the Assistant Director for Schools and Learning. She commented that appeals processes were strictly governed by a code that they were required to follow and had little discretion. The Director of Children's Services commented that parents often thought that they had choice regarding schools rather than the right to express a preference. He felt that it was important that schools explained the admissions process clearly to parents. The advice that parents currently received was variable in quality.

- Voluntary aided schools had their own admission criteria and these were usually very similar to those of other schools. Faith schools normally also included priority for children based on their faith. There was a 50% cap on the number of children who faith schools could select on the grounds of faith.
- Job descriptions for Haringey nursery and children centre workers had last been updated in 2015/16.
- Very good results had been achieved by each of the recent OFSTED inspections of schools in Tottenham that had taken place. All had received good or outstanding ratings, with the result that 97% of Haringey schools now fell into these categories. It was noted that it was not only academies that had made rapid improvements. The Cabinet Member stated that it was hard to generalise as to what schools did to bring about improvements but excellent teaching and leadership and high expectations were key factors. The Cabinet Member commented that there were very few local authorities with such a high percentage of schools that were as highly rated as those within Haringey.
- 860 free places would be provided for 2 year olds from September. In terms of the 3 and 4 year old offer, it was anticipated that 3,299 15 hour places would be provided and 1,131 30 hour places. Likely levels of take up were not yet clear.
- An evaluation of the effectiveness of the Early Help service was underway and would be completed by the autumn. This would include data analysis and trends would also be examined. In addition, focus groups were being used to consider qualitative issues.

10. CABINET MEMBER QUESTIONS - COMMUNITIES

Councillor Eugene Ayisi, the Cabinet Member for Communities, reported on the key priorities in his portfolio that came within the terms of reference for the Panel. These were based around reducing re-offending, improving confidence in policing and sustainable youth provision. He referred to the recent terrorist incident at Finsbury Park mosque and stated that he was pleased that reassurance had been given to the local community by community safety partners. Discussions on resilience had already taken place with faith groups to address feelings of vulnerability. There had been an increase in visible Police presence and, in addition, work was being undertaken to enable communities to police themselves. The Prevent programme to address violent extremism was continuing in the borough and a faith forum had been established. Faith groups had stated that their biggest concern was to ensure that young people had somewhere to go and something to do in their spare time. There was concern that some were getting into trouble.

The Cabinet Member responded to questions as follows;

- The Council and Homes for Haringey both welcomed job applications for people who may have offended when younger and complied with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act. There were nevertheless some offences that were never considered “spent” and some roles were exempt from the provisions of the Act. In such cases, a risk assessment was undertaken. The Chair raised the issue of cases where previous offences had not been flagged up on employment but action taken retrospectively. The Director of Children’s Services reported that he would be disappointed if this had happened within Children’s Services and stated that he would be happy to look at any individual cases where it was felt that this might have occurred.
- He felt that young people mainly carried knives because they were afraid. The Police Territorial Support Group had been active in the borough periodically during spikes in the levels of knife crime. Stop and search was now undertaken based on intelligence rather than the appearance of individuals. Discussions had taken place with the Borough Commander to ensure that Police officers based outside of the borough treated young people respectfully when deployed in Haringey. Work to restrict access to knives had taken place and involved 195 businesses. Test purchases had also been made. Monthly problem solving meetings were held with community safety partners.
- He felt that early intervention and closing educational attainment gaps were the long terms solution to knife crime. Panel Members raised the issue of knife arches. It was noted that the provision of these within schools was in the Mayors strategy for addressing the issue. Although they were not ideal, they could make young people feel safer. It was noted that Haringey was 5th in London for knife crimes but top for those that were gang related.
- Project Future was currently working with 130 young people. 65% of those attending accessed therapeutic help. In addition, a number had become volunteers at the project. Funding had been secured to enable the project to

continue to May 2018. This had been financed by the Council, Barnet, Enfield and Haringey Mental Health Trust and an underspend from the Big Lottery fund.

- In reference to the Prevent programme, he reported that concerns had been raised in some areas of the country that the programme might be too invasive. It was therefore important that the community was involved in developing it. Lots of work was being undertaken in schools within Haringey, including primaries, as well as colleges. There was a steady flow of referrals. The programme was not just concerned with Islamic extremism but right wing and all other sorts.
- There was an extensive programme of activities for all young people during the summer holidays. He felt that this was nevertheless not enough. There was a need to re-visit proposals to develop the Youth Zone. The Council was not in a position where it could turn down £3 million for youth services. A decision needed to be made regarding the site though. He recognised that there were some concerns but it would be possible to re-shape the proposal if need be. He agreed to provide a written response to the concerns that had been raised by the last meeting of the Panel.

AGREED:

That the Cabinet Member for Communities be requested to circulate a written response to the Panel to the issues that had been raised by them previously in respect of proposals for the Haringey Youth Zone.

11. CHILD AND ADOLESCENT MENTAL HEALTH (CAMHS) : ACCESS FOR BLACK, ASIAN AND MINORITY ETHNIC CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Catherine Swaile, Vulnerable Children and Young People's Joint Commissioning Manager at Haringey Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), reported that the data from within report had been compiled from data from the CAMHS caseload. It was acknowledged that a more consistent way of recording ethnicity was required. The Panel noted that direct referrals could be made from schools. In addition, there was also the new Choices service, which parents could access on their own if necessary. CAMHS worked very closely with the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) and there was also an outreach service that included provision for home visits. A proactive approach was taken and services can be adapted to the needs of young people.

The "Choices" service provided universal access and dealt with a range of issues to do with emotional wellbeing, mental health issues and concerns around behaviour. A single meeting was offered and, following this, referral was made to other services, if required. Psychological therapies were also provided and these could be accessed via GPs. For higher levels of need, Simmons House and the Beacons Unit provided in-patient care where necessary.

She stated that patterns of BAME referrals had not been analysed yet. However, the majority of the borough's population was now BAME. Haringey was characterised by comparatively high levels of referrals for conduct disorders but lower levels of eating disorders. Take up of services was lower in the east of the borough than the west despite there possibly being a greater level of need.

In answer to a question, she stated that there had been considerable publicity for the Choices service. It had begun operating in October. Work had also taken place with faith groups and a pilot service had begun in a local synagogue. She agreed to find out further information regarding provision for girls and LGBT. She also agreed to look at the feasibility of publicising the service through Haringey People.

She reported that there was a lack of suitable emergency accommodation for young people in crisis and that A&E had to be used as Police cells were not suitable. Young people who had been arrested had access to liaison and diversion services and these were linked to the Council's Youth Justice Service. The Big White Wall website was a useful resource for young people in dealing with emotional issues, such as anxiety and depression. Psychological therapies were also available for young people and provided by Open Door in Haringey.

In respect of the increase in primary school exclusions, Mr Abbey reported that this had been raised with primary school Head Teachers and at the Schools Forum. The Joint Health and Well Being Board was also looking at the issue. The increased exclusion rate was very worrying and there was a need to intervene at an earlier stage, before CAMHS became involved. Exclusion tended to exacerbate issues but schools were often under pressure and had funding issues in respect of providing the level of support that might be required.

AGREED:

That the CCG be requested to circulate further information to the Panel regarding provision for girls and LGBT young people and to look at the feasibility of publicising the Choices service through Haringey People.

CHAIR: Councillor Kirsten Hearn

Signed by Chair

Date