

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON THURSDAY 5TH OCTOBER 2017

PRESENT:

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

Co-opted Members: Luci Davin (Parent Governor representative) and Uzma Naseer (Parent Governor Representative)

17. FILMING AT MEETINGS

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

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None.

19. ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None.

21. DEPUTATIONS/PETITIONS/PRESENTATIONS/QUESTIONS

None.

22. MINUTES

AGREED:

That the minutes of the meeting of 29 June 2017 be approved.

23. REVIEW ON DISPROPORTIONALITY WITHIN THE YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM.

Jennifer Sergeant, the Head of Targeted Response and Youth Justice reported on progress with the implementation of the recommendations of the Panel's review on disproportionality within the youth justice system. She stated that the issue was not unique to Haringey. There were a large number of recommendations from the review and these were cross cutting in nature, requiring input from Early Help, the Police, regeneration and the NHS.

She highlighted the following specific areas of progress:

- Haringey had, using the disproportionality toolkit, recently submitted Haringey's outcomes to the Youth Justice Board. Disproportionality was now also embedded in the Youth Justice Service's performance framework;
- Funding for the next year had been obtained by Mac UK to finance Project Future. The economic impact of their work was being assessed by the London School of Economics;
- A social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) pilot plan was being developed by the Council's Early Help service, with the intention of it becoming part of their core offer to families;
- The Schools Forum had a Black and Minority Ethnic Steering Group, which was addressing issues such as underachievement and the most effective use of the Pupil Premium; and
- Discussions were taking place with Police colleagues regarding the setting up of a reverse mentoring scheme with young people for the borough.

Progress was being made across all of the areas covered by the review's recommendations. It was perhaps not quite as quick as would have been wished but the issues in question were system wide. There might be a need to review how targets were measured so this could be done in a suitably robust manner.

In answer to a question regarding the recent publication of the Lammy Review, she stated that it had been welcome and the Council had contributed to it. It had referred specifically to youth justice and the need to intervene early and Haringey was well positioned to have conversations with law enforcement agencies regarding its implications. In particular, issues regarding Police behaviour were being taken up locally.

Eubert Malcolm, Head of Community Safety and Enforcement, reported that confidence in the Police in Haringey compared poorly with other London boroughs, with it rated 29th out of 32. The Community Safety Partnership were addressing this issue and the conclusions of the review tied in with this agenda.

Ms Sergeant reported that the Council was working with the Police and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) to offer triage and diversion. The CAMHS presence in Police stations was being increased and extended and funding to progress this had been received from the Ministry of Justice. Triage was already well established and part of best practice. It was possible that it might be moved the Early Help in due course.

In answer to question regarding the Gangs Matrix, Ms Sergeant stated that the boroughs had no control regarding who was on it. There were currently three young people of below the age of 18 from Haringey on the Matrix and the youngest of these was 14, The view of Assistant Directors with responsibility for youth justice across

London was that there should not be any children on it as they did not have the resources to be a gang member and were more likely to be being exploited. They therefore wanted the Mayor's Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC) to revise the Matrix. There needed to be a shift away for those under the age of 18 being considered primarily as criminals and for safeguarding issues to be given greater priority. Councillor Ayisi, the Cabinet Member for Communities, reported that the Police had promised to look again at this issue. There were particular concerns that people could appear on the Gangs Matrix merely through association. If you were young and lived in certain areas of the borough, it was hard to avoid any association with individuals that were involved in gang activity. Associating with such individuals did not equate to gang membership. He agreed to feed back the concerns of the Panel regarding this issue.

Concern was expressed by Panel Members that Police Borough Commanders only stayed in the borough for four years. There was a view within the community that Haringey was viewed primarily as a source of useful experience for senior Police officers.

Councillor Weston, the Cabinet Member for Children, reported that the Metropolitan Police were currently undertaking a review of their safeguarding processes. There was a view that the age of criminal responsibility was currently too low. Young people were at risk of exploitation from gangs and could, for instance, be used to sell drugs on their behalf. A meeting had taken place between local authority representatives and the previous Minister responsible for these issues where concerns had been raised. Representations could also be made to the Metropolitan Police regarding these issues.

The Cabinet Member for Communities reported that the Lammy Report into the had not uncovered any previously unknown issues but nevertheless provided hard evidence to support what was known already. The strength of this gave the report real weight and some of the outcomes revealed were shocking. There had still not been any response to it from the government and there was a lack of confidence that action would take place quickly. The findings could nevertheless be used to challenge local partners. The Panel noted that dialogue was taking place with the Borough Commander and the outcome of this could be reported back.

In answer to a question, Gareth Morgan, the Head of Early Help reported that a transition workshop had been arranged for a number of children who primary schools considered would find the transition to secondary school challenging. Their progress was being tracked and there was up to six weeks support available for those that required it. It was a pilot project and would be rolled out across the borough if successful. 78% of those attending were BAME and there was a 60/40 split between boys and girls.

Deborah Tucker, Commissioner for Alternative Provision, reported that there was a BAME Steering Group linked to the Schools Forum that was focussing attention on improving the attainment levels of Black Caribbean boys. They performed very well at Key Stage 1 and 2 but dipped from Key Stage 3 onwards. Whilst exclusions from primary schools were low, they were a lot higher in secondary schools. An offer of support was available to schools that had high levels of exclusions. In addition, efforts

were being made to move the focus of attention away from exclusions to a wider range of issues. Consideration was also being given to ensuring alternative provision was of the highest quality.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families reported that consideration was being given to the BAME attainment gap and, as part of this, a transition toolkit was being developed. This would include the recommendation that there be a named person in the senior management team of all schools with specific responsibility for these issues. The aim was to develop a system wide approach to address this. Secondary schools had been involved in the work that had been done.

In answer to a question, Mr Morgan reported that there were links between Family Support Workers and every school on the borough, irrespective of their status, as well as alternative provision. This was part of the core offer from Early Help. Underlying behavioural issues could be addressed and support provided for the whole family.

The Panel noted that the period of the evaluation by the London School of Economics of the work undertaken by Mac UK through Project Future had been extended due to additional grant funding for the facility being obtained. It would look at the range of benefits that Project Future had provided for local young people and it was hoped that the evidence generated would strengthen the case for further funding. The Cabinet Member for Communities commented that rehabilitation of offenders was very important and the work undertaken by facilities like Project Future was invaluable.

In answer to a question, Ms Tucker reported that the TBACC had taken over the running of the boroughs Pupil Referral Unit following the failure of the previous provider. There could be managed interventions for young people who had been found in possession of knives, including a weapons awareness programme. The decision to permanently exclude was the responsibility of schools and exclusion was not essential.

Mr Morgan reported that the establishment of borough's Youth Council had been a success and improved engagement with young people. It was now attracting more than 70 young people on a regular basis and was providing useful and well informed input on a range of issues.

Panel Members thanked officers and partners for their candour in responding to the report's recommendations. It was hoped that the Panel's forthcoming review on restorative justice would also provide useful input on this issue.

24. FINANCIAL MONITORING/BUDGET SAVINGS

Paul Durrant, Senior Business Partner from Corporate Finance, reported that Period 5 for 2017/18 showed a projected overspend of £2.8 million. The position was nevertheless an improvement in previous years. Savings had not been made at the pace anticipated though and it was also a struggle to accommodate pressures on children's social care. There was a £1.4 million overspend in children's placements and current ones were being reviewed. There had not been the move to less expensive placements in the numbers that had been planned and unit costs were 10% higher than expected. There had been a focus on the most expensive placements

and the average of these had now gone down. Period 6 was likely to show an improved picture.

There had been a net £700k overspend on staffing. This had been due to the costs of recruiting social workers and the fact that service was currently above establishment levels. Efforts were being made to convert agency social workers to permanent Council contracts. SEN transport had a projected overspend but savings were planned to be achieved through the introduction of single pick up points. Savings were intended to be achieved in respite care through the adoption of a more consistent policy. Although £1.4m had been saved so far, this was £3.1m short of savings targets. There was a management plan that would aim to bridge this gap and the projected £2.8m overspend was a worst case scenario.

The Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) comprised three blocks of funding. The high needs block showed a projected overspend of £1.34m and proposals on how this would be mitigated would be considered at the next meeting of the Schools Forum. Any deficits would be carried forward so it needed to be addressed so that funding could be sustainable in the long term.

Margaret Dennison, the Interim Director of Children's Services, reported that the suitability and duration of the most expensive placements was being reviewed and benefits from this were already being seen. However, there would always be a cohort of children and young people with exceptional needs. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families reported that a letter had been written to the Secretary of State expressing concern at the lack of suitable residential placements, which limited the options available.

In answer to a question regarding the use of agency social workers, Ms Dennison reported that there was an outline plan in place to address this issue and she was confident that more could be achieved. The key issue was the context within which effective social work took place. Haringey often lost social workers to competitor authorities that were better rated and could offer lower workloads. It was not about money but providing a strong offer and improving the context. The service was investing in a specific officer to address recruitment issues. There were particular agency staff that Haringey needed to be looking to retain. In addition, a more robust induction process needed to be developed. The overall offer to staff needed to be improved though addressing issues such as workloads, professional development and working conditions. Models of social work practice also needed to be developed further, such as the greater use of family group conferences.

In answer to a questions, Ms Dennison stated that the savings in SEN transport accrued from just having a single pick up point. Concern was expressed by Panel Members that children and young people with SEN might not live close to each other, making this difficult for parents and carers. Ms Dennison stated that she would be happy to look at any specific instances where this might be causing hardship. The Cabinet Member for Children and Families commented that decisions on travel had been taken some time ago. There had not previously been a policy on the issue. The new arrangements worked for some people but the SEND team would be happy to look at any cases where there were problems.

In answer to a question regarding the cost per year of supporting children from families with no recourse to public funds (NRPF), it was agreed that a briefing note would be circulated with details.

Panel Members raised the issue of schools that held large cash reserves. The Cabinet Member stated that the Schools Forum determined how funding was allocated to schools but the Council did not have any control over how it was used after this. The majority of schools were using all of their funding and many were not under considerable financial pressure.

In reference to the pressures in SEND funding within the DSG, the Cabinet Member commented that this was being replicated across London. Work was being undertaken by the Schools Forum to mitigate pressures within the aim of ensuring that provision was sustainable.

In answer to another question, Ms Dennison reported that an OFSTED inspection was expected within the next three months. Until the inspection had taken place, there was no change in approach planned in respect of providers. Many other London boroughs faced similar challenges to Haringey and there was still a large amount of “spot” purchasing that took place.

The Cabinet Member reported that DSG money had been needed to fund nursery places that were required for the two-year-old offer in order to balance the budget. The intention was to avoid a repeat this year. In answer to a question, she agreed to report back on the provision of speech therapy as part of the therapeutic input provided for two-year-olds. She also stated that intention was that the interim Director of Children would be in post for a few months. Stability for the service was required and there was therefore no urgency in making a permanent appointment.

AGREED:

That further information be provided to Panel Members on the following:

- Changes to travel arrangements for SEN children;
- The total cost of support per year to children from families with no recourse to public funds; and
- Provision of speech therapy as part of the therapeutic input provided for two-year-olds.

25. WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

AGREED:

1. That the Panel’s proposed review on restorative justice commence on the completion on the current review on support to refugee children and that consideration be given to undertaking this in a “scrutiny in a day” format; and
2. That, subject to the above, the work plan be approved.

26. NEW ITEMS OF URGENT BUSINESS

None.

CHAIR: Councillor Kirsten Hearn

Signed by Chair

Date