

Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee



Minutes

Wednesday 19 June 2019

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Sharon Holder (Chair), Lucy Richardson, Alexandra Sanderson, Asif Siddique and Mark Loveday

Co-opted members: Nandini Ganesh (Parentsactive Representative) and Matt Jenkins (Teacher Representative)

Other Councillors: Councillor Larry Culhane (Cabinet Member for Children and Education)

Officers:

Mandy Lawson (Assistant Director for SEND), Jan Parnell (Assistant Director for Education), Kevin Gordon (Assistant Director of Assets, Programmes & Operations), Steve Miley (Director of Children's Services), Bev Sharpe (Assistant Director for Social Care), Tony Burton (Head of Finance for Children's Services)

1. APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED MEMBERS FOR 2019-20

The Chair informed the Committee that Vic Daniels was standing down as a co-opted member due to other commitments.

RESOLVED

The Committee approved the appointment of the following Co-opted Members for the 2019-20 Municipal Year:

- Eleanor Allen, London Diocesan Board for Schools
- Nandini Ganesh, Parentsactive Representative
- Nadia Taylor, Parent Governor Representative
- Matt Jenkins, Teacher Representative

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Matters Arising

Jan Parnell noted that the letter to schools congratulating them on their achievements would be going out by the end of term.

The Chair asked for careers guidance to be a future agenda item.

ACTION: David Abbott

RESOLVED

The minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

3. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Nadia Taylor and Eleanor Allen.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Asif Siddique (he entered the meeting at 7.11pm during Item 5).

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

5. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PRIORITIES FOR 2019-20

Steve Miley, Director of Children's Services, presented the report which gave the Committee an overview of the key priorities and challenges for 2019-20 – as well as some of the department's major achievements over the past year.

Steve Miley said he was very confident in the department's core services - social care had been rated good with outstanding features by Ofsted, the borough had excellent schools, and the recent SEND Ofsted review had been really positive. He stressed that this did not mean officers were being complacent - each service needed constant attention to maintain those standards. He then spoke about the areas that had been identified where changes needed to take place.

Services for adolescents

Officers explained that it was harder to get the outcomes the Council wanted with adolescents - both in education and social care. It was harder to achieve progress with older children because patterns of behaviour became entrenched and the roots of those issues often stretched very far back in their lives. The challenge was - could the Council design services that identified those children earlier so they could be better supported in school and with their family. It would require more intensive services than currently offered.

Emerging needs in mainstream education

Jan Parnell said there was a small but significant number of children who were disengaged from mainstream education. Officers were working closely with schools to improve inclusion in schools. They had commissioned a headteacher to put together a report on alternative provision to look at how to be more inclusive. There

would also be an inclusion event for headteachers with expert speakers at Chelsea Football Club on 12 July.

Councillor Lucy Richardson said she applauded the emphasis on positive behaviour management - it was a key issue for parents. She asked if the Council could make this strategy transparent to everyone in the borough - particularly the third sector. Jan Parnell said she hoped to get a commitment that was broader than just schools at the conference. There was currently a pilot in 6 primary schools around mediating children's use of the internet, making it more positive. They were also running parenting classes in Children's Centres.

Steve Miley said there was an ambition for all services - and the wider community - to be trauma aware. To properly address challenging or troubling behaviour meant understanding the trauma behind it. Jan Parnell was developing a trauma-aware proposal with Early Help to broaden this work out.

Councillor Lucy Richardson asked if the Council had engaged with the 'Challenging Behaviour Foundation' - a charity for people with learning disabilities who have behaviour challenges. Mandy Lawson said the SEND team were working with the CCG on an intensive behaviour support offer that was based in the home and community (rather than clinic-based).

Matt Jenkins asked if there was more that could be done during school holidays. Jan Parnell noted that 16 primary schools were doing activities this summer but she wanted more. The Youth Offer will also help address this. Councillor Larry Culhane said the Council had recently seed-funded a project, working with the Young Hammersmith and Fulham Foundation, that was similar to the local offer but for young people. It would be an easy to use directory of activities online that made it easy to find out what's available in the area.

Councillor Lucy Richardson asked how officers were monitoring the effectiveness of transition services.

Mandy Lawson said they were pulling together a joint group with Children's Services and Adult Social Care to have joint oversight of transition tracking. Councillor Richardson asked if officers were keeping records of people who 'fell through the net'. Mandy Lawson said there were fewer of those cases - the gap was in the ASD pathway but officers were working on this with Adult Social Care through the joint ASD strategy.

Nandini Ganesh asked what about those young adults who weren't eligible for Adult Social Care. Mandy Lawson said their needs should be met through the community local offer and the industrial strategy.

The Chair asked for more information on the inclusion work. Jan Parnell reported that the Council had commissioned Gary Kynaston, the Headteacher of Hammersmith Academy, to do a review of alternate provision (AP) in the borough. The report will be shared with the Committee shortly. Officers were also reshaping contracts with a range of AP providers. It was a key issue for Children's Services. Councillor Larry Culhane said the review was a fantastic example of the new way of

working - working in partnership with schools and academies. He thanked to Jan Parnell, Steve Miley and Gary Kynaston for a great piece of work.

The Chair asked if there were any outstanding issues following the separation from the shared services arrangements. Steve Miley said the major one was the Education which was very slimmed down. There were a couple of areas that needed more capacity:

- Childcare lead
- AP lead
- Children's Services Commissioning

Jan Parnell noted that a new head of Early Years had been appointed and was starting in September.

The Chair asked what the key cost pressures for the department were. Steve Miley said the major pressures were:

- The High Needs Block (services for children with additional educational needs) - this was a national issue. The current funding formula wasn't based on the actual number of children with additional needs or the complexity of those needs.
- Looked after Children's placements - high cost placements reflected the higher levels of deprivation and social disadvantage in society today. The Council was committed to providing care for those children but costs can be very high.

Mandy Lawson added that the Council's commitment to ensuring disabled children don't need to go to out of borough placements would mean high cost individualised packages.

The Chair requested a progress report that set out more detail on the areas covered in the report - including key indicators, costs, pressures etc.

ACTION: Steve Miley

Matt Jenkins asked if the Industrial Strategy was addressing the issues with T Level qualification and a lack of work experience placements. Jan Parnell said officers had worked with schools and special schools to deliver placements. The team had also written a 14-19 strategy that aligns with the industrial strategy. The Council wanted to use its contacts to put together an offer for schools and was working with the Economy department to help build capacity to support T Levels in schools. Jan Parnell added that she was about to engage with Founders for Schools on an online portal that would provide matching offers of mentoring, talks to schools etc. The Chair asked for an update on this at the next meeting.

ACTION: Jan Parnell

6. OUTCOME OF THE JOINT LOCAL AREA SEND INSPECTION

Mandy Lawson, Assistant Director for SEND, presented the report with Alison Markwell, Designated Clinical Officer, who was working across the CCG and the Council to improve partnership and pathways.

Alison Markwell informed the Committee that there were three key lines of enquiry:

- Effective identification
- Assessing and meeting needs
- Improving outcomes - i.e. 'are we making a difference?'

The inspection took place in December 2018 and inspectors commended H&F on how strong the inspection was. The borough was sent a letter from the minister and he even tweeted his congratulations. The report was clear that 'outcomes had improved' and there had been a 'sea change' since the creation of sovereign arrangements.

Mandy Lawson and Alison Markwell discussed some of the key positive elements that were highlighted by the inspection:

- One of the reasons the borough did well was its honest approach - the self-evaluation element was very strong.
- Moving away from the shared services arrangements enabled the service to be redesigned based on feedback from parents.
- Joint-commissioning was a fundamental tenant and that was done well in Hammersmith & Fulham.
- Educational outcomes for SEND were very strong, the borough had good special schools and SEND pupils were well supported in mainstream schools.
- Mandy Lawson reported that they had great support from Councillors during the inspection too which was a key priority for them.

The borough also had a strong partnership with Parentsactive - they have been very effectively holding the Council and the CCG to account. Co-production of services with parents was very strong, and officers wanted to develop that further with young people too. The SEND team were working closely with the Strategic Leads for Co-production to take that forward.

The main areas for development highlighted by the inspection were:

- Integrating pathways - officers were working with health providers and children's centres to move this forward.
- Improving SEND support for children without EHCPs.
- Therapy - officers were looking to redesign speech and language therapy services.
- Improving the Local Offer website.
- Fixed-term exclusions in the secondary phase - an AP review had taken place and officers were doing behaviour work with schools to address this.
- Inconsistently written ECHP - the bulk of EHCPs were transferred during shared services and were not done to the quality officers would have liked.

- Reducing the waiting time for an ASD diagnosis.

An action plan had been written to address these issues and monitoring and governance processes had been put in place. There was a SEND inclusion board with the Managing Director of the CCG and the Director for Children's Services - and a SEND transformation group focussed on implementation.

Councillor Mark Loveday asked officers to talk through the 'red' action on the tracker - action 15 that related to identification, assessment and early intervention. Mandy Lawson said this was a universal service for all children involving health visits that could pick up on delays in communication, socialisation, and motor development. The service should have been delivered jointly between early years and health visitors but that hadn't happened - it was delivered solely by health visitors at present.

Councillor Loveday asked what plans were in place to integrate the service. Officers said Public Health colleagues could provide an answer outside the meeting. The Chair asked for Public Health to provide an update on this at the next meeting.

ACTION: Anita Parkin

Councillor Lucy Richardson asked if there were holiday activities for looked after children - she noted that Camden had a theatre group for children in care for example. Jan Parnell said H&F worked with the Lyric theatre and commissioned them to do theatre and film projects with looked after children. Bev Sharpe added that Children's Services put together specialist packages for children based on their interests - and put on a wide range of residential retreats.

Councillor Larry Culhane took a moment to formally give the Council's thanks to Mandy Lawson, Nandini Ganesh and Parentsactive for the huge effort they had put into SEND services in the borough. Nandini Ganesh noted the inspection had been a challenge but said it had been a valuable experience.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 8.20 pm

Chair

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