



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Monday 20 April 2015

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Caroline Needham (Chair), Alan De'Ath, Donald Johnson and Natalia Perez Shepherd

Co-opted members: Dennis Charman (Teacher Representative), Nandini Ganesh (Parentsactive Representative), Philippa O'Driscoll (Westminster Diocesan Education Service Representative) and Nadia Taylor (Parent Governor Representative)

Other Councillors: Sue Macmillan (Cabinet Member for Children and Education), Sue Fennimore (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion), Ben Coleman and PJ Murphy

Officers: David Abbott (Committee Co-ordinator), Laura Campbell (Committee Co-ordinator), Steve Comber, Ian Heggs, Steve Miley and Mike Potter (Head of Commissioning)

59. MINUTES

Nandini Ganesh noted that the second paragraph under the heading "Post 19 Provision" on page 5 should be included under the heading "Personal Budgets".

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 10 February 2015 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

60. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Caroline Ffiske, Eleanor Allen (London Diocesan Board for Schools Representative), Andrew Christie,

Executive Director of Children's Services and Brenda Whinnett, Youth Voice Coordinator.

61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

62. YOUTH VOICE AND THE YOUTH COUNCIL MANIFESTO 2015-16

The Committee welcomed Rahima Begum, the H&F Youth Parliament member, Darnell Christie, the deputy H&F Youth Parliament member and Johnley Videna, Youth Council member, who came to talk to the Committee about the Youth Council's role and priorities. They also played a DVD they had prepared which outlined the Youth Council's manifesto. It was noted that the top 5 issues identified by the young people were the living wage at work, giving young people a voice in improving communities, mental health, work experience and voting at age 16.

The Committee were invited to ask the young people questions and the following points were raised:

Facilities for Young People

One co-opted member referred to the bulge in school placements noting that there would be a lot more young people in the borough who would need more facilities other than schools, such as youth clubs, and that this was something the Youth Council could monitor. It was reported that the Youth Council consults with young people mostly through schools and also some other facilities.

Work Experience and Apprenticeships

The Youth Council was working with the Workzone, which would be going into schools and holding workshops to promote opportunities and services that were available for young people and help support them, such as with work placements and working on CVs.

One member noted the difficulty in finding work experience places as many organisations would not take young people under the age of 18 and asked what could be done to work with employers in respect of this. The "Take Over Day" was referred to as a successful example of young people gaining work shadowing experience within different areas of the Council. It was noted that the quality of the work experience was important to make sure the young people got the best out of it.

Ian Heggs reported that careers advice was now delivered by schools and the local authority helped schools to give impartial advice. There had been only a 2% take up of apprenticeships in the borough, so this needed to be promoted to encourage take up. Young people also needed to be ready for apprenticeships so this would be looked at.

One of the co-opted members referred to a scheme in the USA where businesses who provided work experience was published which helped to encourage businesses to take part. He suggested that the Council looked at this to develop an expectation that schools and businesses should be involved in work experience.

One of the young people noted that schools were only now starting to look at other courses and apprenticeships and felt that there needed to be an emphasis on non-academic courses.

Engagement

The young people were interested in ensuring that other young people had an active voice and felt part of the community so they were listened to. They had met with decision makers and been involved in consultations to help ensure their points of view were heard.

The Youth Council was made up from representatives from schools around the borough and held meetings every two weeks. Young people were consulted through questionnaires, a Facebook page and form tutors at schools were asked to promote questionnaires at schools. It was noted that if form tutors were not engaged to promote particular consultations, the young people did not have the time to chase them up, however they also attended school assemblies to promote the elections of the youth parliament to help engage with young people.

It was reported that there were approximately 33k young people in the borough and it was asked what could be done to reach out to the other young people who were not involved in the Youth Council. One of the young people responded that every year there was a national consultation that took place called "Make Your Mark" where over 800k young people responded; this consultation aimed to find out the top issues that they identified as important. It was hoped to target schools who were not engaged with the Youth Council work to be able to reach out to more young people; it was noted that the Youth Council could not act on any issues unless it had data from young people to prove that these areas were what the young people wanted to target.

The Youth Council wanted to work with Councillors and officers to help encourage all schools to participate this year. One of the co-opted members suggested that the next time the Youth Council was undertaking a consultation, it should share the information with the teacher representatives who would help put the information out to teachers to encourage to get involved and help promote their work. The distribution of the Summer in the City booklet was referred to as it was felt that schools did not circulate it and it was noted that schools needed to help to promote the activities by distributing the booklet.

Ian Higgs was happy to raise any particular work or issues of the Youth Council at the headteacher meetings that were regularly held. He also suggested that some of the young people might want to attend the secondary headteachers meeting to talk about issues.

One of the co-opted members noted that parents had a lot of influence in their children's activities and asked that information on youth involvement be given to parents when they applied for their child's secondary school place. Ian Hegggs responded that many people applied for places on line, so he would look into whether information could be included on that particular part of the website to promote activities.

Action: Ian Hegggs

Communications

The Youth Council had a Facebook page which had questions for young people to answer to get feedback on particular issues. One of the members suggested that the communications team would be able to help to promote the Youth Council's work such as showing the DVD on the website so young people could comment on it.

Special Schools and Disabled Children

It was asked whether there was a representative on the Youth Council from a special school and it was reported that although there was not, the Youth Council worked very closely with HAFAD (Hammersmith and Fulham Action on Disability), visiting their organisation to see what issues they were facing.

In respect of the "Take Over Day", it was asked that accessibility for disabled children be considered so that disabled children could also take part.

The Chairs of two other Policy and Accountability Committees (PAC) were also in attendance. Councillor PJ Murphy, Chair of the Finance and Delivery PAC congratulated the young people in the way they had presented themselves at the meeting and filtered the questions. He referred to the issue of mental health that the young people had identified as a subject to look at, noting that this was a critical area and for the young people to think about what the Council needed to do to support people. He also asked the young people to think about what could be done to encourage schools towards promoting apprenticeships, as schools tended to focus on pupils going to university rather than gaining employment.

Councillor Ben Coleman, Chair of the Economic Regeneration, Housing and the Arts PAC referred to a strategy for the arts that his PAC was interested in developing, noting that there were a lot of places in the borough, such as the Bush Theatre, and questioned how the borough could create more resources for young people. One of the young people responded that he would raise this subject with the Youth Council, as he felt that not many people saw the arts as important yet London had a rich heritage in the arts. It was mentioned that creative arts was not promoted as well as it could in schools and that pupils were told to revise for exams during the school holidays when there were opportunities for art activities that could also be taken up. It was also noted that promotion and advertisement of activities needed to be improved as some people had not known about the activities that was available for them during the summer holidays.

Councillor Sue Macmillan reported that she had asked officers to look at whether some work experience places could be included as part of contracts with large companies and would look at including this as part of the procurement rules. Councillor Fennimore reported that youth provision across the borough would be looked at and asked for the young people's input as much as possible. The young people were asked to come to the Cabinet Members if they had any ideas and for their input as their thoughts were valued.

The Chair reported that the Youth Council and members had already identified areas of interest that they would work together on, which included:

- Adolescent mental health – this was an area of concern identified by the Youth Council and they would feed into a task group that had been set up to look into this which was led by Councillor Alan De'Ath. Councillor De'Ath had arranged to visit the next Youth Council meeting to discuss how they could work together on this issue.
- Support for bi and multi lingual families – the Committee was due to consider a report on this subject at its next meeting and the Chair would be meeting with the Youth Council to consult the young people on their views on this area.
- The Chair had agreed to be the link member to act as a liaison with the Youth Council and the Council and would share information and promote ways of working together, to help look at topics where they could work together on. The Youth Council would reach out to the schools to encourage them to get involved.

The Chair thanked the young people for coming to meet the Committee and for giving an interesting presentation.

RESOLVED

That the Committee and Youth Council would continue to work together on particular areas of interest as identified and will look at topics as and when they arise to see how they could work together.

63. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no comments raised under this item.

64. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Ian Heggs, Director of Schools Commissioning, presented the update report on Andrew Christie's behalf, noting the following:

Primary School Admissions

It was reported that the number of pupils without a place continued to reduce and it was expected that by September there would be very few without a place. All pupils would have been offered a place however it may be that some places were not what was preferred. The Committee was told that 90% of pupils were offered their top 3 preferences. There were 70 pupils without a place but there were sufficient places, in particular with the opening of the new Burlington Danes Primary School.

SEN

In respect of the transition of SEN statements, as outlined in pages 38 and 39 of the report, it was noted that there was pressure on the system to complete the transitions within 3 years. The Council was asking for a longer period to complete this as a lot of training and support was needed to be able to transfer the statements into the plans. The Council was waiting to hear whether the new Government would extend the time frame for transitions. The Parentsactive representative commented that parents were generally anxious about the process, in particular about the personal budget element.

Resources for schools who had some pupils with complex needs was raised and Ian Heggis referred to the changes introduced last year where each school was required to publish their own offer for SEN. He noted that not all schools could offer all resources and facilities but each would have different needs and resources. H&F had a good offer in terms of its special schools but there was not a wrap around support in relation to post 18 which the department was focusing on.

Focus on Practice

In response to a question relating to this section in the update, Steve Miley commented that the aim was for social workers to engage with families and to be able to do that the case loads would need to be reduced. The discussions that took place at supervision meetings should be more focused on practice.

Teaching Assistants

A member raised a query about assessments of teaching assistants as he had experienced a spelling list for his daughter which was spelt incorrectly. It was noted that teachers required qualifications but the teaching assistants did not and the member should raise this issue at the school to be looked at.

65. CABINET MEMBERS UPDATE

Councillor Sue Macmillan, Cabinet Member for Children and Education, updated the Committee on the following:

- SEN passenger transport service - she was working very closely with parents, headteachers and governors to try to move forward with the service. A proposed solution would be going to Cabinet the following month for consideration and the Committee would be reviewing the proposed service at a meeting in the autumn.
- all private schools in the borough had been contacted in respect of the possibility of sharing their facilities. A meeting was held at the end of March to discuss this, where representatives from 5 schools attended and went through what they were already doing. It was a positive meeting and the schools were willing to share even more facilities with the boroughs pupils. Work would be done to see what the private schools were willing to provide and this would then be advertised to schools in the borough to let them know what facilities were available.
- The Youth Parliament results events was successful and inspiring; there had been 6 candidates running for the Youth Parliament positions.

- Councillor Macmillan had visited Ark Swift Primary School and was pleased to see the progress at the school. She had also visited the Haven and followed up issues that had been raised with her in respect of parents with disabled children.
- Work was underway with KidZania to open a facility in Westfield for children aged 4 to 14 years old, which was funded through section 106 agreement funds. All children in the borough aged between 4 and 14 would have a free ticket to the facility.
- A visit took place with the Looked After Children and care leavers team and front line workers. Councillor Macmillan spent half a day with the team and it was a useful visit to discuss various issues.

Councillor Sue Fennimore, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion, responded to a question on how the Council worked with food banks to make sure children went to school fed, noting that her focus was to do everything that could be done to wipe out poverty. There had been a lot of work done in relation to food banks and a report would be going to the Health, Adult Social Care and Social Inclusion PAC on this and this report could be shared with this committee.

One issue raised by one of the co-optees related to schools experiencing a high turnover of pupils due to children moving in and out of the borough because of a change in their housing. He noted that due to the short notice, schools were unable to do any transitions and he asked what happened to the children who moved out of the borough. Councillor Fennimore commented that there was a housing crisis in London and there were few houses where families could be accommodated. Housing was one of the Council's top priorities and Councillor Fennimore was working with the Cabinet Member for Housing to look at housing issues and how they could be resolved.

Ian Heggs also noted that when a child moved suddenly, the headteachers contacted the department straight away so they could look at the transition of the child. Officers tried to link the headteachers and colleagues in the housing department so that the pupils got the support needed. When a child moved from a school suddenly, they were kept on the school roll until the department knew where they had moved to. Every effort was made to avoid moving children where they had a SEN statement or were in Year 11. The Chair asked that this issue be monitored and that the protocol of not moving children also be extended to children in Year 10. She asked that this be looked at in more detail and reported back to the Committee. It was suggested that Mike England, Director for Housing Options Skills and Economic Development, also be invited to the meeting where this issue be discussed, to explain the issue relating to the housing stock.

Ian Heggs commented that the Children's Services department could provide data in respect of the mobility of pupils and prepare a report. It was asked that the report covered the cost of travel for parents where they have been moved away from the school and any support available for this. Ian Heggs noted that more details about the housing issues would be needed from housing colleagues but that schools ran hardship funds which could help

cover travel costs. It was also asked that the report included case studies of families that were affected so that the Committee could hear about the challenges involved where families were placed outside of the borough and the effect on the pupils' education.

In response to a question whether the Mayor of London could be lobbied to extend the subsidised costs of travel to trains, Ian Heggs would feed back this issue to Andrew Christie to raise at the London Transport Group meetings that he attended.

Action: Ian Heggs

RESOLVED

That a report on the transition of children moving in and out of the borough due to housing issues be considered at a future meeting.

66. INTERIM REPORT OF THE CHILDCARE TASK GROUP

The Chair of the Childcare Task Group, Councillor Natalia Perez Shepherd, introduced the interim report that outlined the work of the Task Group so far, which included meeting a number of different witnesses, holding an online survey for parents, meeting two Quality Childminder Forums and much more. It had been envisaged that the a final report would be submitted to this meeting but the Task Group decided to focus on key areas which needed more time to consider, which were:

- The importance of accurate information for local families and the current performance of the Family Information Service (FIS)
- Improving support for childminders and the effectiveness of the offer of childminding services for local families
- The role of Children's Centres in delivering effective, high quality childcare in Hammersmith and Fulham
- Building on the findings of the 8-6 out-of-core-hours pilot for support in schools
- Innovative solutions for growing a skilled workforce.

The Task Group would feed back to the Committee on this areas in the next municipal year and one of the items had already been addressed in the report; the FIS was the first area highlighted to look at in more detail. Feedback from parents was gathered and the report highlighted the key issues regarding the FIS which were as follows:

- The service was not being used by the majority of families in the borough
- The service was not well promoted and families were unaware of the website
- The website itself was not easy to navigate and it was difficult for families to find the information they required
- Providers had been unable to update their details directly and requests for updates have not been responded to.

Redouan Maarouf, Service Manager (Contact & Assessment Service) was in attendance to answer any questions about the FIS and reported that the backlog of information had now been updated. The queries would be dealt with twice a week and the website monitored daily so there would not be any delays from now onwards. The FIS was based in the Front Door service

which was the key contact for all child protection queries that took priority, so it was questioned whether it was the best place for the FIS to be situated.

The Task Group had looked at options that could improve the service of the FIS, and the following recommendations were identified:

- To explore the options for the FIS website to be improved. This should include the potential for automatic updating of childminder information via the Ofsted data feed, the sharing of data between existing sources of information and for the website to deliver a more user friendly experience for families and childcare providers.
- That the local authority reviewed the location for the management of the FIS within Children's Services including options for future staffing arrangements.
- That the corporate communications team were consulted about promotion of a new improved service once it was implemented.

Steve Comber, Policy Officer, reported that officers had looked at the above options and noted that a single designated officer would be an immediate improvement but would also look at other innovative ways of using the officer support, for example the officer could deliver on more than Children's Services provision such as working with economic development to help families get work. Steve Miley, Director of Family Services, noted that the officer should be linked to childcare and reported that proposals for the short term solutions would be produced and then longer term options looked at.

The Chair commented that residents wanted up to date local information and to be able to see where the vacancies were. She noted there should be strong links with Children's Centres who had connections with childminders and that work should be done in partnership with childminders to help them promote their business. A role of the FIS could be to train others to manage and collect information and to make it easy for parents to access the website. Steve Miley reported that officers were exploring the IT involved as it was more likely to have live information about vacancies if childminders were able to update the website themselves.

In respect of a question on the timeframe expected to resolve the issues raised, it was reported that some issues could be resolved more quickly, such as the location of where the FIS was situated and the updating of the information, whereas some issues would take longer to be resolved. The service would be strengthened so that the advisor role was more targeted to childminders and the limited resources targeted to the areas that needed it most. Councillor Macmillan commented that the use of the 0845 contact telephone number, which parents had reported to be expensive to use, was not acceptable and would be sorted out immediately.

The Chair asked that whenever there was a job fair or apprenticeship events held that information on childcare be available at the events to help parents.

Councillor Perez Shepherd thanked all those who were involved in the Task Group. She was encouraged that the issues raised by the Task Group relating to the FIS were going to be addressed.

RESOLVED

That the Childcare Task Group report back to the Committee on the different areas identified which have been looked at in-depth in the next municipal year.

67. WORK PROGRAMME

The agenda items scheduled for the next meeting would be as follows:

- Support to Bi-Lingual and Multi Lingual Families
- Young Carers, including the role of the school community in identifying young carers.
- Workload of Teachers

It was noted that the Childcare Task Group would report back on items it had considered to the CEPAC meetings. The Parentsactive representative invited the Task Group to talk to parents of disabled children. The Chair responded by asking that there be a specific report on childcare for children with disabilities and for the Parentsactive representative to work with the Chair of the Task Group on this.

Action: Councillor Perez Shepherd, Nandini Ganesh and Steve Comber

As part of the new system of Members of the Committee feeding back on any visits to schools that have taken place in respect of recent Ofsted Inspections, the following updates were given:

Fulham College Boys School – The Chair reported back on her visit held with Philippa O’Driscoll, and the following points were noted:

- The approach to young people was empathetic, inclusive and supportive, with schemes such as the Duke of Edinburgh Awards
- There was a pilot project specialising in EAL fair access
- The studio school had a programme for young people to help build capacity for EAL and assessment needs
- The school had positive relationships with employers e.g. Mitie, a facilities management company who work on local estates.
- The school had hired a young person who had completed an apprenticeship in their own maintenance team.
- There was strong pastoral support and work was done with young people with autism in liaison with the Queensmill School
- One challenge noted that the school still lacked popularity in the community and this view had not been updated to reflect the school’s performance.
- There were ambitious plans for a community sports facility.

Larmenier and Sacred Heart RC Primary School – Philippa O’Driscoll updated the Committee on her visit with Nadia Taylor to the school, and the following was noted:

- The school was outstanding and the academic results were extraordinary
- its extra curriculum activities had depth and richness

- there was an in-depth understanding of art history, where a former teacher stayed on to provide this
- there was a choir in every class and each year had an allotment section
- there was a clear vision at the school, looking at the child's eye view of everything
- a lot of work had been done in respect of bullying, having child mentors at the school.

It was suggested that a visit to Larmenier and Sacred Heart RC Primary School be arranged for other headteachers to use as good practice. Ian Heggs noted that there were strong links with headteachers and they shared best practice; at each term the headteachers shared key issues within their cluster. He noted that one of the comments raised in the visit in respect of training and advice would be picked up through the lead adviser who visits the school.

The Committee thanked Laura Campbell, Committee Co-ordinator, as this was her last meeting clerking the Committee and welcomed the new clerk David Abbott.

68. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

This was the last meeting of the municipal year. The Committee noted that the dates of the meetings for the next municipal year would be agreed at Annual Council on 20 May 2015.

Meeting started: 7.03 pm
Meeting ended: 9.29 pm

Chair

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