

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD – UPDATE FOR 26 JULY 2011

EDUCATION SELECT COMMITTEE – 7 JUNE 2011

1. **Membership**

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Marcus Ginn onto the Committee and thanked his predecessor Councillor Michael Adam for all his work.

Councillor Caroline Needham was re-appointed as the Vice Chairman.

2. **Development of a Strategic Plan For Children**

The report provided a summary of key evidence regarding the needs of the children and young people of Hammersmith and Fulham and draft priorities for the next three years, which were set out in section 2 of the report. The purpose of the plan was to supersede the 2008-11 Children and Young Peoples' Plan (CYPP).

The draft plan had been considered at the Children's Trust Board and would go back to the Board when the priorities had been identified and finalised. Young people had been consulted on the plan through the Borough Youth Forum (BYF) and their comments had been incorporated.

The Committee discussed the draft plan, in particular focusing on the draft priorities, child poverty, play provision, youth provision, children's health and attainment. It recommended that the draft plan included information on what play provision was available in the borough, that play provision in parks be discussed with Residents Services and this information be included in the plan and that a report on play provision be included on the Committee's list of work programme items.

3. **Update on Combining Children's Services with Westminster City Council and The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea**

A further update report on the tri borough proposals was presented to the Committee. The next stage for the proposals was for the Cabinets in June to consider the range of proposals. For the Children's Services proposals, there would be a reduction of 50% of senior posts and 45% reduction in back office posts across the three boroughs. There would be a 30% reduction in support staff posts. Youth offending services would be merged across the three boroughs; there was one court which the three boroughs provided services to so by merging the services it would create efficiencies. Adoption services would be merged which would increase the number of placements and would be a better use of resources; there

were some foster carers who were not used and it would be in the best interests of the children to find placements. It was also hoped to reduce the amount of placements in the independent sector which was at a higher cost. It was more likely to find a foster match across a bigger pool of placements. There would be one Local Safeguarding Children's Board with one chair which would create efficiencies, as officers would only need to go to one board instead of two or three and training would be shared. The total target savings over three years was £11.5m and Hammersmith and Fulham's share was closer to £5m.

The Committee discussed the proposals, the sovereignty arrangements, social enterprises, efficiencies in the proposals, scrutiny of the joint services and the schools of choice agenda.

4. Update on Borough Youth Forum Event

The Chairman introduced the report which highlighted the event organised by the Borough Youth Forum (BYF) with members of the Committee on 19 May 2011 as an engagement exercise. The Chairman, Councillors Chumney, Graham and Needham and Fiona Cook attended the event, along with officers and also Councillor Robert Iggulden, who was interested in youth engagement.

It was an enjoyable evening and was well attended. The young people set the agenda, chaired the meeting and engaged Members and officers in a 'name game' icebreaker, which gave the opportunity for everyone to get to know each others' names. There were also group discussions on how BYF and Members could support each other in the future and clear recommendations for continued mutual support were identified. The Chairman thanked Brenda Whinnett, Children and Young People's Involvement Officer, for organising the event with the BYF.

It was agreed that similar events would be held in the future and it was suggested that another one be planned later in the year. The Chairman asked that Members reached out to colleagues to publicise the event.

The Committee made the following recommendations:

- (1) A DVD of the BYF's work be prepared and shown at future Committee meetings to update members on the views of the BYF and to look at any areas they could work together;
- (2) The BYF be used as expert witnesses at Committee meetings where appropriate;
- (3) The BYF be considered to be used to help write and conduct questionnaires, where appropriate; and

- (4) A list of schools where large numbers of the borough's pupils attend outside Hammersmith and Fulham could be produced, to help engage with harder to reach young people.

5. Work Programme and Forward Plan

The issue of child poverty and the impact of housing in the borough was raised by some members as a potential task group topic. The Chairman agreed to mention this suggestion to the Overview and Scrutiny Board, prior to any further development of the idea and focus area.

The next meeting on 7 September would be a health themed meeting and the following items were scheduled:

- Paediatric Audiology Services
- Presentation from the Director of Public Health on children's health and the PCT arrangements
- Report from the Task Group on Oral Health in Children.

It was agreed that the BYF would be involved in the September meeting by asking for their views on health issues that affected young people and their priorities, views and concerns and this be fed back to the Committee at the meeting via a DVD prepared by the BYF. The Committee also agreed the following items to be included on the work programme list:

- The Views of Children in Care report and the Report by the Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board on safeguarding in Hammersmith and Fulham, be included on the work programme as annual report items;
- an annual report be presented to the Committee on the work of foster carers and the Committee to receive a presentation on a "day in the life of a..." foster carer.

Councillor Donald Johnson
Chairman of the Education Select Committee