



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

# Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Wednesday 3 September 2014

## **PRESENT**

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

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

**Other Councillors:** Sue Macmillan (Cabinet Member for Education and Children), Sue Fennimore (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion)

**Officers:** Laura Campbell (Committee Co-ordinator), Andrew Christie (Executive Director of Children's Services), Tim Deacon (Safeguarding and Partnership Manager), Ian Heggs (Tri Borough Director of Schools Commissioning), Dave McNamara (Director of Finance and Resources), Steve Miley (Director of Family Services), Margaret Murphy (Lead Commissioner (Children and Early Years)), Mike Potter (Head of Commissioning (Early Intervention)), Rosemary Salliss (Development Team Manager) and Jane West (Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Governance)

## **12. MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee held on 8 July 2014 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings.

## **13. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

## **14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **15. CO-OPTED MEMBERS**

The Chair welcomed Dennis Charman and Nandini Ganesh to the Committee and congratulated them on their appointment, noting that they would contribute greatly to the discussions.

### **RESOLVED THAT:**

- (1) the Committee notes the appointments of the following voting co-opted members:
  - London Diocesan Board for Schools Representative - Eleanor Allen
  - Westminster Diocesan Education Service Representative – Philippa O’Driscoll
  - Parent Governor Representative – Nadia Taylor
  - Parent Governor Representative - vacancy
  
- (2) the Committee agrees the appointment of the following non-voting co-opted members:
  - a representative from Parentsactive – Nandini Ganesh
  - a teacher representative – Dennis Charman

## **16. CHILDCARE IN HAMMERSMITH AND FULHAM**

Mike Potter, Head of Commissioning, introduced the report on childcare, which was one of the first Committee reports to flag one of the Cabinet’s key priorities. A wide range of representatives were invited to the meeting and the purpose of the discussion was to listen and learn from them and to hear what the Council did well in terms of childcare provision and what it could learn from the representatives. Childcare was a complex area as the local authority (LA) had a responsibility but it did not directly provide the services. Provision of childcare was important to the borough and the LA needed to make sure that there was sufficient childcare, that it was appropriate and of good quality.

The report covered the following areas; the current childcare provision in the borough; the childcare sufficiency assessment (which was no longer a duty for the LA but there were plans to develop future assessments); support for parents with affordability of childcare; delivery of the two year old offer (20% of families identified had been offered placements however this had now been extended to 40% of the cohort this week); quality of service; childcare and children’s centres; links to the adult learning and skills service; priorities for the development for childcare provision; opportunities for integrated provision; and national policy developments.

The Chair invited members of the Committee to ask any questions and the following was noted:

#### Childcare Sufficiency Assessment

The Committee was informed that the assessment was based on a survey completed four years ago so it may not now be a true reflection of the current situation.

#### Two Year Old Offer

There was a challenge to meet the two year old offer; if every family on the list came forward to take up the offer there would be a shortfall of places. Not all on the list had taken up the offer. This could be as some families needed encouragement to come forward or they might not have known about the offer. Currently places were provided for all of the families who had requested them, regardless of which ward they were in. Where there were more places available in some areas, families would be directed to places which might result being in another ward. Information on how close the Council was to saturation point in terms of the places and details on the demand of the offer could be reported to the Committee throughout the year.

**Action: Mike Potter**

It was asked who was responsible to contact the families and whether it was a statutory responsibility. Mike Potter responded that contacting the families was not a statutory duty, however the entitlement to the provision was and the responsibility was for all agencies to publicise the entitlement, such as through posters etc. LAs should work with its partners, such as health visitors, to raise awareness. It was reported that from October 2015, the responsibility of health visitors would come to the LA public health from NHS England, so the LA would be working with these partners in respect of raising awareness. It was asked who the officers outreached to and who had taken up the two year old offer. Mike Potter responded that information on this could be given at a later date when more information was known about the take up.

**Action: Mike Potter**

It was asked what happened to the children when they turned three years old in respect of this offer and this would be reported back to the next meeting.

**Action: Mike Potter**

#### SEN (Special Education Needs)

In reference to SEN children and those with care plans, it was asked how these children were identified when accessing the two year old offer and how many nurseries had expertise in SEN. The Committee was told that children did not usually have SEN statements until they were older, so although it was included in the two year old offer criteria, it was rare that a child fell within that category. Information on how many of the children in the two year old offer fell within the criteria of having a current statement of special educational needs (SEN) or an education, health and care plan would be reported back to the Committee.

**Action: Mike Potter**

It was reported that a number of places were able to provide care for children with additional needs. Officers would visit providers, would look at the targeted plan for the child, meet the parents and continue support the child through to the new plan.

In response to a question, the Committee was informed that the private, voluntary and independent (PVI) sector was very good at identifying when a child had additional needs. Any observations would be discussed with the parents in respect of any needs and if any needs were identified the providers would then discuss this with officers.

One of the early years headteachers commented that out of the 170 places at his nursery, there were 16 applications for statements last year. He noted that some sectors could not cope with additional needs and the children ended up in the public sector with providers who had the expertise. There were sometimes different obligations for private and public sectors. Those children who were vulnerable and had high needs were not always identified and not always get the help needed.

#### Support for Parents with Affordability of Childcare

In respect of parents studying, it was asked how they were made aware of what support was available for them. It was noted that the education providers would be the primary route for students to access support available. It was also noted that the Family Information Services was available to send information to any parents who contacted them.

#### Flexibility of Childcare

One of the co-optees observed that parents who worked shifts had difficulty with childcare and it was noted that out of hours childcare was a challenge as providers could not be forced to provide services out of hours. Officers had talked to Brent Council who had produced an out of hours childcare list; Brent were doing a review on this work as it was early days and so far there had not been a huge take up of this service. Mike Potter noted that this was an opportunity for officers to look at how many families' needs were met with the current services on offer.

#### Childminders Inspections

In reference to the table in paragraph 7.4 of the report, the Committee was informed that childminders could be inspected without looking after children and would receive a "just met" grading; therefore not all childminders required improvement, they just did not look after children at the time of the inspection. It was questioned if the way the statistics were presented could be improved. It was also asked if the data could be looked at to see what number of the 30% of childminders were not actually working; this information would be reported back to the Committee at the next meeting.

***Action: Mike Potter***

The childminders who required improvement would receive support from officers and they would try to improve the levels of service and put together a development plan. Officers would try to get childminders involved in children's centres to help get support, such as peer to peer support, workshops and training. It was asked that a review of the support to childminders be done and this information would be reported back at the next meeting.

**Action: Mike Potter**

### Three Year Old Offer

Referring to the three year old offer where children were entitled to 15 hours of education, it was commented that this did not take place immediately, the place could be offered up to four months after the child's birthday. It was asked whether this was an issue. In response, it was noted that the eligibility criteria was set nationally and the LA could only offer places to those who qualified. There was the same situation for the two year old offer where those children who turned three during their placement and were waiting for their three year old offer place would then be blocking the place for other two year olds.

One of the headteachers from a nursery had met with parents that day to discuss childcare and there were a lot of questions about when their children were eligible for places. She noted that to meet funding arrangements, all places at her nursery had to be filled in January. Therefore if a child was three in the February they would not get a place until the September, as the nursery could not hold places for those turning three between February and September. This was a challenge as the nursery did not want to make money but it needed to meet costs. It was asked if this issue could be raised with the Department for Education and Andrew Christie responded that this could be raised at various networks such as with London Councils. He noted that officers would need to work out what opportunities the LA had with its framework. There were discussions at the Schools Forum on nursery funding and this issue could be raised. Andrew Christie confirmed that this was something officers would look into.

**Action: Andrew Christie**

### Health Visitors

One of the children's centres managers commented that links with the health sector was important and it was a good idea to have health visitors at the children's centres. Another centre manager commented that they worked with health visitors and it was a great way for health visitors to visit parents.

The Chair invited any other comments from the representatives and members of the public in attendance and the following points were raised:

- Comments from some parents included that the children's centre helped them further their career, the children loved the staff and that the family felt part of the community at the centre.
- There were a lot of ideas from the children's centres on what could be done in terms of provision.
- Children's centres had adapted to change, such as in respect of the introduction of the two year old offer.

- It was reported that in the Addison Ward, due to one provider closing down and another receiving an inadequate grading, there was a massive demand for childcare places.
- The Chief Executive of the Masbro Centres referred to talks about the Masbro Brook Green site becoming a potential facility and he noted that his centre was interested in joint funding to establish this as centre as it was an excellent venue. He also referred to the site at the Edward Woods Estate and would like to see it recognised as a spoke centre and more activities and facilities could be developed there.
- There was a lot of money in the third sector that could be used for facilities, such as lottery funding.
- It was reported that the Trust for London had done a survey that found one in four children in Hammersmith were below the poverty level and this needed to be addressed.
- One member of the public referred to the parent/family experiences where parents were working long hours to pay off debts so they did not experience spending quality time with their children.
- There was a tension between getting the children ready for school and parents getting back to work. Children could be placed in poor quality childminders which would be detrimental. This needed addressing as later on nurseries and schools then suffered from some of these tensions.
- There were various government initiatives introduced over time and they did not connect together very well.
- Every LA would suffer funding cuts and this needed to be addressed now.
- In respect of vulnerable families, there were problems with all the different systems used by the different partners, such as some used Framework 1 and others used a different system for reporting child protection issues.
- It was hoped that a vision would be sought for families and children in Hammersmith and Fulham. Families expected different things from services and a long term vision was needed to cover children under the age of seven, not just for children aged five years old and under.
- Holiday provision – it was mentioned that there was a lack of childcare for under 11 year olds which caused problems in the school holidays. There was a programme in the Summer for teenagers, but there was a gap for 8 to 11 year olds. Families had other children not just under the age of five so this was an issue when childcare for older children was not available.

The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions and agreed that a task group would be set up to look into this area. She asked for volunteers to be on the task group and Councillor Natalia Perez Shepherd, Councillor Caroline Ffiske, Michele Barrett (Head of Vanessa Nursery), Michael Pettavel (Head of Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre), Andy Sharpe (Masbro Centre) and Danny Kruger (Only Connect charity) volunteered to be involved.

One member referred to modern life situations and asked that the task group looked at realistic problems that could be addressed and come up with solutions.

The Chair referred to the task group, noting that it would also consider:

- the quality and fairness in the provision of childcare
- partnership providers, such as third sector, health, private sector etc.
- look at how to support families in the current climate
- look at how to support people on edge of what was provided, such as those families struggling to juggle work and quality family time

The task group would report back at the next meeting to outline its vision and the timescale of the review.

#### **RESOLVED THAT:**

A task group be established to look into childcare and early years provision in the borough.

#### **17. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were no issues raised as part of this item.

#### **18. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

As part of the Executive Director's update, Ian Heggs, Director of Schools Commissioning, was asked to give additional information to the Committee on the school performance results. The Committee was told that the Key Stage 2 results were provisional and subject to further modifications, but the current figure was 81% for the borough. An overview of the results would be sent to the Committee.

***Action: Ian Heggs***

It was reported there had been changes to the English GCSE curriculum during the course of the year, where 20% of the marks for speaking and listening were removed. Pupils who did not have English as their first language would be more affected by this change. Concerns were expressed over this change, noting that it would affect individual young people who might have received a C grade but now would not due to the change. It was asked for some indication of how many pupils had been affected by this change.

The provisional pass rate for 5 or more GCSE A to C for English and maths was 65%, compared to 59% last year. A full report on the results would be presented to the Committee later on in the year.

It was reported that the A Level results were broadly in line with national performance, with A\* to A being above the national results.

It was asked if value added results could be given and Ian Heggs commented that these results were not yet known. It was expected that there would be 3 levels of progress figures and this information would be included in the report to the Committee. Ian Heggs also reported that progress measures were

changing and he would provide the Committee with a briefing on these changes.

***Action: Ian Heggs***

In respect of the Troubled Families initiative, the performance of H&F was mentioned and noted that H&F was 65<sup>th</sup> out of 150 local authorities. A target was set for the number of families that had to be turned around and it was noted that if more families were identified to work with, the performance was measured against the initial target. Andrew Christie commented that H&F performance was ok but still needed to improve, such as there were issues relating to tracking down data and there was not a central collection point for the data. Data was still being gathered. It was noted that nearly half of the families worked with had been turned around which was a good success. The classifications of what determined a family to be turned around was discussed and it was requested that a report providing information on the other families that had not been turned around be sent to the Committee highlighting any key characteristics involved.

***Action: Andrew Christie***

The Chair reported that for future meetings there would be an update from the Cabinet Member as a regular item on the agenda. For this meeting Councillor Sue Macmillan updated on the following:

#### Sullivan School

In June it was agreed to consult on the proposals to revoke the decision to close Sullivan Primary School and at Monday's meeting of the Cabinet, it was agreed that in light of the changes to the housing policy and the resultant demand for school places, and also considering the representations made, Cabinet decided to revoke the decision to close the school. Councillor Macmillan commented on the brilliant Key Stage 2 results at the school which underlined the school's achievement particularly in a year of turmoil and uncertainty.

#### SEN Passenger Transport

This was one of the most urgent priorities for the Council and a working party had been set up with the Councillor Macmillan, headteachers of the special schools, Councillor Needham and Nandini Ganesh, and would meet on Thursday 11 September to consider the issues.

The training of drivers was questioned and it was reported that the training programme had started and would continue throughout the first part of the term and all contractors would put their staff through this training. It was asked that a report covering what key metrics the providers were judged by on how the service was performing be brought back to the Committee. This was agreed and the conclusions of the working party would also be reported back to the Committee.

***Action: Andrew Christie***



The Chair ensured that this would be a regular item on the Committee's agenda until the Council was happy with the service.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

- (1) A report on school performance, including the value added results, would be considered by the Committee at a future meeting;
- (2) in respect of the SEN passenger transport, information covering the key metrics on what the services performance was judged on be brought back to the Committee along with the findings of the working party; and
- (3) in respect of the Troubled Families Initiative, a report providing information on the other families that had not been turned around be sent to the Committee, highlighting any key characteristics involved.

**19. LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD ANNUAL REPORT**

Steve Miley, Director of Family Services, introduced the annual report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Unfortunately the Chair of the LSCB was unable to attend and sent her apologies. The report provided an assessment of the effectiveness of local arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Children would not be protected without partners working together. It was noted that although the Council was the lead agency for child protection, it did not discover child abuse unless someone alerted the Council, such as schools or the ambulance service. One of the LSCB key functions was to make sure the whole multi agency work force was aware of child protection matters.

Child Exploitation

Steve Miley referred to the recent reports in the news on child exploitation in other areas of the country and noted that H&F was in a completely different position; H&F had this issue on its agenda for a long time and had a contract with Barnardos who worked with individual children and gave presentations to schools on child exploitation, meeting on a monthly basis to discuss any issues. However it was an area where work continued as there could be children that agencies were not aware of who were being exploited.

Female Genital Mutilation

It was reported that the Council worked with health agencies and schools on this issue and a tri borough LSCB group had been set up to look at this. More work with agencies would need to be done so that if there were any children at risk then officers would be able to identify them. A member commented that although very rare, genital mutilation was also experienced by boys. Andrew Christie responded that was not something they had come across so far but this was a question that could be put to the LSCB as it had a special work programme to look at FGM.

### Intelligence Gathering

In response to a question on what work was done with neighbouring boroughs in terms of intelligence gathering, it was reported that information was shared through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), where the core agency of this was the MET Police who had good links with other police forces.

### Forced Marriages

A member asked about forced marriages and was told that the LSCB had a community development worker who worked with the different faith communities which helped raise issues in respect of forced marriages. In terms of referrals, there were low numbers; there had been 1 or 2 concerns and officers had intervened but the department was not aware of cases of young people being taken abroad and put into a forced marriage. Links with the community was key so that there was recognition, referral and support.

The Chair referred to an event she attended organised by the Home Office where they went into schools to talk about forced marriages but some schools were not keen to raise it due to religious issues. Andrew Christie commented that there was a training and development programme and details of this training could be sought to see if the Council could do some training on it. It depended on the willingness of the schools to be involved in the training but schools were normally willing for this.

### Links with Young People

This was discussed in respect of getting young people involved and helping with communicating any issues of concern. Andrew Christie noted that the first line of safeguarding was having good relations with social workers and carers, which helped pick up any issues.

### Child Protection and Training at Schools

A co-optee expressed concern over ensuring children did not keep secrets in respect of any child protection issues. It was noted that there might be so few referrals because some children did not feel confident to come forward and building this confidence was important. Another co-optee also referred to the misunderstanding that occurred when some children self-harmed and this was picked up as a child protection issue. It was reported that child protection staff needed to get advice and support from those who understood the needs of SEN and disabled children in order to identify any concerns. The high quality of training on SEN at special schools was mentioned and it was questioned whether mainstream schools had developed this high quality of training. Tim Deacon reported that the LSCB worked closely with Hilary Shaw, Tri Borough Safeguarding Lead in Education, who had been delivering presentations to designated leads at schools and was promoting training in schools.

### Membership of the LSCB

It was asked if places could be opened up to other school staff who had daily experience of child protection. Andrew Christie responded that the members of the LSCB were selected to represent different areas but more thought could be given in respect of local partnership representation on the board.

### Young Carers

A member of the public referred to children being identified at carers in another borough through the A&E services, and asked if there was not an A&E how would this be picked up. It was reported that young carers was something the department was aware of and often schools picked up where children were carers.

### Young People Protecting Themselves

The Chair referred to advice given on what information young people should have on them in order to protect themselves and Steve Miley noted that there had been work done by young people on how other young people could help themselves in order to keep safe.

The Committee thanked the child protection teams for a fantastic service, which was recognised internally and externally.

## **20. 2015 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) - UPDATE**

Jane West, Executive Director of Finance and Corporate Governance, introduced the report, noting that the Council was facing drastic reductions. The current budget gap was just under £25m which would rise to £66.6m in 2018/19. The table on page 109 of the report showed how the current savings targets for departments was allocated. The Children's Services department had the biggest budget and therefore ended up with a bigger savings target. Cabinet Members had to consider these budget gaps and make plans on how to meet the savings. The Policy and Accountability Committees would receive more detailed proposals at their meetings in January.

The Committee received a presentation from Dave McNamara, Tri Borough Director of Finance and Resources, which outlined the Children's Services department savings in context, the savings made since 2011 and expenditure. It was reported that out of a budget of £53m, over £16m of savings had been made since 2010/2011. The current savings target for 2015 to 2018 was £10.3m which was 28% of the budget, which compared to the start of the savings target was now 50% of the budget. The majority of the savings made so far had come from areas where discretionary services were provided and savings were also made through tri borough arrangements.

Most of the budget was spent in social services (£40m). It was noted that even when young people become 18 years old there was still a cost to the local authority if they were still in care.

The challenge was now to find areas where the department could take money from. There was a large staff bill and a lot of money was spent on partners to provide services. The impact of the savings on the department was questioned and it was noted that every year the department faced savings however the scale in which savings had been made was now difficult to find further savings in the past few years and it was going to get increasingly

difficult. It was reported that there were still some further opportunities to make savings in the tri borough arrangements and opportunities to explore beyond the tri borough, such as work had already been done with the West London Alliance in respect of foster care provision. A lot of work had been done to commission services to be delivered more efficiently. Work on the proposals to make savings would be done that did not compromise the Council's statutory obligations.

In response to a question on the costs for Deloitte to look at cost reductions, it was reported that the contract was for Deloitte to support the Critical Friends Board at a cost of £150k, where only half of this amount was paid for the support and the remaining half would be paid when it had identified £1m savings which were acceptable to the Council.

The Chair referred to the recent child protection reports in the press about Rotherham, noting that when such cases in the past had a high profile it generated an extra demand on social services and additional referrals as people became more concerned. Andrew Christie responded that officers looked at the implications of pressures due to demand. He noted that there had not been a rise in the number of children in care system and although officers have seen more referrals in relation to these issues raised in the Rotherham case they were of a small scale. Following the case of Peter Connelly there had been a rise in referrals and it was noted that there were always pressures in the system.

It was asked where staffing costs savings could be made as social services were already stretched. Andrew Christie responded that officers did not want to over stretch services but there were opportunities such as improving efficiencies.

In response to a question on whether the changes in the new Children and Families Act would put additional burden on the budget, the Committee was told that the savings figures related to the current fund and that there was protected spend on SEN services. There were funds through the dedicated needs block however there were concerns that this would be put under pressure in particular to the extension of the care plan for young people until they were 25 years old; the government had made provision to extend the plan to the age of 25 but did not allocate additional funds for this provision.

## **21. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair reported that the main item for the November meeting would be to consider adolescent mental health. There would be a report on this issue and various stakeholders would be invited to the meeting to give their views and comments on the services provided. Members of the Committee were asked to send any aspects of this area that they would like covered to the Committee Co-ordinator.

The Committee discussed future agenda items and the following items were requested:

- a report on leaving care services
- a report on transition places for disabled young people aged 18 to 25, in respect of the new education and care plans
- a report on safeguarding – to look at how young people were equipped to identify risky network sites and how to protect themselves.

Nandini Ganesh asked that the childcare task group considered disabled children and holiday schemes. She noted that Parentsactive had done extensive work on this area and was asked to submit this as part of the evidence to the group. The Chair noted that it would be good for the report to include childcare during the holiday time and asked Nandini Ganesh if she or anyone else from her group would also like to be on the group.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

The above work programme items be included on the agenda for future meetings.

**22. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting date was scheduled for 5 November however the Committee requested that this date be changed as it clashed with Guy Fawkes night, where many parents would be out with their children at events.

**RESOLVED THAT:**

The 5 November meeting be changed to a different date.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm  
Meeting ended: 9.52 pm

Chair .....

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