



London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham

Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee Minutes

Tuesday 10 February 2015

PRESENT

Committee members: Councillors Caroline Needham (Chair), Alan De'Ath, Caroline Ffiske (Vice-Chair), 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 Fennimore (Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion), Sue Macmillan (Cabinet Member for Children and Education) and Ben Coleman

Officers: Steve Buckerfield (Acting Head of Children's Joint Commissioning, North West London Collaboration of Clinical Commissioning Groups), Laura Campbell (Committee Co-ordinator), Andrew Christie (Executive Director of Children's Services), Jackie Devine (Tri Borough Commissioning – Early Years), Alison Farmer (Assistant Director for Special Educational Needs), Ian Higgs (Director of Schools), Rosemary Salliss (Early Years Foundations Development Manager), Alan Wharton (Head of Asset Strategy (Schools and Children's Services), Rachael Wright-Turner (Director of Commissioning)

47. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED THAT:

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee held on 19 January 2015 be confirmed and signed as an accurate record of the proceedings, subject to the following amendments:

- page 7, minute number 40, second paragraph, replace the word "Medina" with "Midaye"; and
- Page 7, minute number 40, third paragraph, replace the word "SEN" with "SME".

48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Eleanor Allen, London Diocesan Board for Schools Representative. Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Sue Fennimore, Cabinet Member for Social Inclusion.

Nandini Ganesh, Parentsactive Representative, also sent apologies as she had to leave the meeting after the SEN Arrangements Agenda Item.

49. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In respect of agenda item 8, School Organisation and Investment Strategy report, the following significant interests were declared:

- Councillor Caroline Ffiske as she was a governor of the West London Free School
- Councillor Sue Macmillan as she was a governor of Wormholt Park Primary School
- Councillor Natalia Perez Shepherd as she was a governor of Larmenier and Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School
- Dennis Charman as he was a governor of Melcombe Primary School
- Philippa O'Driscoll as she was Chair of Governors of St Augustine's Primary School
- Nadia Taylor as she was a parent governor at Avonmore Primary School

The above Councillors considered that this did not give rise to a perception of a conflict of interests and, in the circumstances it would be reasonable to participate in the discussion and vote thereon.

In respect of the school meals commissioning item referred to in the Executive Director's update report, Nadia Taylor declared a significant interest as she was a member of the schools working group for the remodelling of the school meals project. She considered that this did not give rise to a perception of a conflict of interests and, in the circumstances it would be reasonable to participate in the discussion and vote thereon.

50. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS (SEN) ARRANGEMENTS

Ian Heggs, Director of Schools, introduced the report which outlined the key developments since the last update provided to the Committee. He noted that it was a huge period of change nationally for children, parents, schools and local authorities. The report reflected on what well in terms of the implications of the changes, included feedback from parents and what needed to be done further in respect of the changes. Alison Farmer, Assistant Director for Special Educational Needs, reported that the department was in the middle of establishing a new SEN service; 20 out of the 21 key workers who worked with parents were in post and a head of SEN had been appointed.

The transition arrangements were a three year programme, where existing statements would be transferred to the new plans. The priority was for post 16 years, and work would then be done to transfer the other age groups. A website was about to be launched for parents that included information in

respect of SEN, so parents knew what they could access; this came about as a result of discussions with the parents group.

The Committee was invited to ask questions and the following was discussed:

Moving Locations

It was asked what happened to those who moved out of the borough and the Committee was told that the new local authority, where it was known, would be contacted, and information passed on with the parents' permission; the new local authority would continue with the plan where the young person had one plan in place.

Transitions

In response to a question on the benefits of the new plans, it was reported that there have already been some benefits seen; at a headteachers meeting one of the headteachers commented that the new approach that had been adopted now was more parents centred and there were now practitioners to help parents so there was a more active role. The approach was more about the outcomes the young people would achieve. The new Education, Health and Care plans (EHC) clarified the health and social care provision and also the extent of the range of provision up to the age of 25.

An example of better integration of services could be seen with the work that had started with health and social care colleagues to help bring together mental health provision alongside education.

Personal Budgets

One of the members referred to the personal budgets where parents were now in charge of the funds and not schools, which had caused some confusion, and asked what plans had been put in place in respect of the personal budgets. It was reported that parents could request for the personal budget and could ask for a speech and language therapist for example, however the therapist would only be able to work in the school if agreed by the headteacher. It had been found that in the last 6 months there had been less take up from parents of the personal budget than expected and one of the co-optees commented that this was not because there was less interest but due to parents not being aware what they could use the budgets for. So far there had not been a request for a full personal budget but there had been some parents that had taken up funds for travel arrangements. The shorts breaks offered had already been available for eligible parents.

Funding

It was reported that the additional money from the government was not ringfenced and work was done with corporate finance to draw down funds for Hammersmith and Fulham. A risk was highlighted as the grants had been allocated for a two year period so there were concerns about what would happen in year three for young people. This would need to be monitored.

It was asked if there was a model of the new EHC to compare to SEN plans and it was noted that a copy of the form for the EHC would be given; the form included a one page summary which intended to detail the profile of the

young person, setting out the priorities and would be owned by the young person and parent.

Action: Alison Farmer

There was more focus on the outcomes in the EHC; the key difference was that it allowed to record education, health and care issues.

It was questioned that if the new legislation covered young people up to the age of 25 but the funding was only allocated for four years, then how would the other years be accounted for. It was noted that the Camden model looked at working with adult services, so it was about looking at existing services to work with young people up to the age of 25.

The members of the public in attendance had the opportunity to also ask questions and put forward their comments, and the following was raised:

The Headteacher for Jack Tizard School highlighted the following comments:

- there were enormous hidden costs for schools and the impact on transitions for schools was great; the amount of time doubled to put each transition into place.
- there was concern on the impact on service delivery day to day
- the three year transition process was a tight schedule and was too ambitious in such a limited period of time
- special schools were in a good position as they were already having personal centred plans but this could be difficult for other schools to adopt.
- there was now a serious focus on 19-25 provision. Jack Tizard School had already looked at how best to support this age group as there were extremely complex needs and learning needs involved, and the school had started to work with parents.
- the needs of children were taken seriously and this was potentially an exciting time for the school with the new developments however there were a lot of challenges.

One parent in attendance expressed concern over the lack of communication relating to the new EHC, noting it was hard to understand the process. He referred to the Pathfinders website that included many reference to the forms. In respect of the EHC form, he felt that there were a lot of questions but it did not cover the future and aims of the children. He referred to a letter from the Department for Education (DfE) on how the form should be set out and commented that this form did not cover what was required and thought the form was confusing. Alison Farmer reported that the form had been developed with a parent group and had shared the form with the DfE who agreed it was acceptable. After one year, the form would be reviewed and officers would consult with the parent group, and hopefully a revised form would be produced. The Committee was told that officers had lobbied for a national form to be produced to make it easier for young people moving around London between boroughs. The H&F form aimed to be parent friendly and it was recognised that it would likely to be revised following its review.

The Headteacher of Queensmill School, spoke about the EHC and noted the following:

- she shared the parent's view on the repetitiveness of the form
- the school looked at young people from ages 2 to 19; it was felt for a long time that provision should not stop at 19 in respect of autistic children and proposals for provision post 19 years old were in place and parents at the school supported this. To be able to continue provision over 19 years, the school had set up a separate company to do this. The Headteacher was grateful for Ian Heggs and Alison Farmer's support in doing this.
- A new building purposely built for autistic children would open in May and members of the committee were invited to attend the grand opening.
- She referred to the costs in day and residential placements at an independent facility and believed what Queensmill School offered was a hugely cost effective model, which kept young people in the community.
- the school worked on all the education skills and looked towards more independent living and working with the community, such as looking at housing etc, whilst still focusing on the key education element of reading and writing.

Post 19 Provision

In response to a question on whether the facilities developed for post 19 at Queensmill School would be for its pupils only, the Headteacher reported that that the facilities had not been exclusively for its pupils.

Steve Buckerfield, Acting Head of Children's Joint Commissioning, North West London Collaboration of Clinical Commissioning Groups, commented that the advantages of the personal budgets needed to be clear. He noted that work needed to be done with GPs in respect of co-ordination needed on the plans. Parentsactive had been involved to advise the CCG on issues relating to children with SEN. He referred to his colleague also in attendance, Alison Markwell, who would like to contribute to any further review on this when it comes back to the Committee.

Speech and Language Therapy

In response to a question from a parent on whether speech and language therapy stopped in Hammersmith and Fulham when young people turned 18, Steve Buckerfield responded that there was no provision beyond 18 but if it was identified on a young person's statement then officers would make sure they would receive the provision. There were speech and language therapy services available for adults. The Chair commented that she would like to see where there was a commitment for young people to receive provision that this was then extended into adulthood. One of the co-opted members also commented that any provision should stop at the end of the academic year and not part way through. Steve Buckerfield mentioned that work was being done to recommission speech and languages services, noting that discussions were necessary to see what the needs were.

Housing and Council Services

The quality of housing accommodation and the issues faced by families with disabled children and non-disabled siblings was raised, and it was noted that it was important to bring together all Council services to work together, so that

adult social, children's services, housing and health worked together to look at families in the round; the new EHC plans were a way forward to bring services together.

It was requested that a report on the development of provision for 18 to 25, including integration of housing, be brought back to the Committee for consideration at a future meeting.

The Chair thanked all those who attended for their contributions.

51. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no comments raised under this item.

52. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S UPDATE

Andrew Christie presented his update report. In response to a question on whether any small businesses had been short listed in respect of the commissioning of school meals, it was reported that there were at least three small and medium enterprises that had been invited to tender. Councillor Ben Coleman reported that the contract should have come back to procurement task force to be discussed but appeared to have gone ahead without being consulted on. It was reported that the recommendations of the task force had gone to the lead members and officers would report back to the task force. Rachael Wright-Turner would discuss this with Councillor Coleman outside of the meeting.

Action: Rachael Wright-Turner

The Chair referred to the item on child poverty, noting that this issue had been identified by the Youth Council as one of its priorities to look at, as well as looking at the living wage. It was asked what key indicators were looked at in respect of child poverty, such as the use of food banks. Andrew Christie noted that the child poverty item was a piece of work commissioned by the Health and Wellbeing Board, which intended to not just focus on issues relating to children but also other cross cutting issues such as housing, and the use of food banks would likely be considered as part of this. The report would range from looking at creating opportunities, down to specific issues such as how to help families find routes into employment.

Councillor Fennimore reported that there was a food bank strategy and one key area was to make sure schools were linked to food banks. A copy of this report on food banks would come to the Committee when it was ready. One co-optee asked that there was reference to the use of Pupil Premium (PP) in the report. The Chair responded that she hoped for an update on the use of PP and the work done in relation to this at some stage in the future and the links between PP and child poverty could be looked at.

53. CABINET MEMBERS UPDATE

Councillor Sue Macmillan updated the Committee on the issues raised by the looked after children and care leavers in the session held before the previous meeting. She reported that laptops had now been provided to 100 looked after children and care leavers in education, Wi-Fi in independent living arrangements was being commissioned and dongles were being provided until the Wi-Fi had been set up, the £30 limit for books had been removed and the parental contribution to university had been increased from £3K to £5K. The Chair was pleased how quickly the concerns of the young people had been addressed. She hoped that this would encourage young people that they would be listened to.

The Chair also referred to work done by Islington Council on e-safety which was available on its website.

The Committee was informed that through the economic development team, a number of firms had been approached to help promote the recruitment of foster carers.

Councillor Macmillan also reported that she was writing to independent schools to help find ways to facilitate them to be able to support state schools.

54. SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY

Ian Heggs, Director for Schools, introduced the report which was the strategy setting out projections and investment plans for the Council. He commented that the Council was well provided for. It was an important opportunity to look at projections, however it was noted that pupil place planning was not an exact science as there were a lot of factors concerned.

Alan Wharton, Head of Asset Strategy (Schools and Children's Services), reported that the demand for school places was rising dramatically in some places. As a result of the investment programme over the last few years, Hammersmith and Fulham was in a good place in terms of school population. There was a sufficiency of places for primary schools up to the year 2020 and for secondary schools up to 2019. He noted that there was no control over how many pupils moved across boroughs and the demand on places for Hammersmith and Fulham schools continued to be very high.

The Committee was told that the Council was currently consulting on the Local Plan. The regeneration developments that had been proposed would have an impact on the projections however the strategy was reviewed on an annual basis so these impacts would be looked at.

The Committee was invited to ask questions on the strategy and the following points were discussed:

Admission Policies

In response to a question on schools being their own admission authority and whether the policies were checked, Ian Heggs reported that a lot of schools were their own admission authority and had to operate in accordance to the admission code. Schools had a duty to consult when changing their policies and if they went ahead with changes that were not compliant with the code they could be challenged on this.

The use of a lottery to allocate places was discussed and it was reported that this was allowed in the admissions code. It was noted that there had been some challenges to schools using a lottery code in respect of whether it was fair, clear and transparent.

Housing

It was asked if the increase in houses being converted into flats had an impact on school places and it was reported that this had not yet become apparent. The local authority monitored trends and saw changes year on year. It was well placed as there was sufficient capacity to meet demands but this was reviewed annually.

Secondary School Places

The duty to provide a secondary school place to residents was raised noting that a place would be provided where it was requested. There had been a slight increase in the number of parents choosing state schools, which would be a challenge for the admissions team; the admissions team would allocate a place for H&F residents but there would be a challenge if the school had a different admission policy.

An amended to the report was noted on page 44, to replace the figure “125%” with “25%”.

Child Yield

The Chair referred to discussions relating to planning in respect of the child yield, as a lot of homes that people would have moved out from had not as the residents could not afford to. She asked how the child yield formula was produced and how it got reviewed. Alan Wharton responded that there had been a lot of discussion on how the child yield analysis was done at the moment because of the way planning contributions were going to be gathered; the contributions had been changed from section 106 agreements to CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy). There was a question whether the child yield now needed to be re-evaluated due to these changes and the Committee would be updated on this in the Executive Director’s update report when further information was known.

Action: Alan Wharton

Pupil Premium

It was questioned what guidance and recommendations were available for schools in respect of the number of pupils that came under Pupil Premium. It

was reported that there had been changes from December where all state schools could give priority for pupils on Pupil Premium. Some schools were already doing this and it was a question whether other schools wanted to introduce this.

Outdoor Space

The growth in the child population was referred to and a co-opted member noted that children did not spend all the time inside the school and asked how this was reflected in the parks policies for example. The Chair noted that that it was important for children to have outdoor space as many had less space to utilise in the home.

55. UPDATE ON THE TWO YEAR OLD PROGRAMME - FEBRUARY 2015

Jackie Devine, Tri Borough Commissioning – Early Years, introduced the update report on the Two Year Old programme (TYO), noting that since the report was produced there were now 397 places for the offer and there was now a take up of 347. There were enough places for those who wanted to take up the offer. The DfE had done a survey on the take up and found the national average was 55.2%, the London average was 42.8% and Hammersmith and Fulham's was 31.8%. Hammersmith and Fulham's take up had now increased to 53%, which was down to building further capacity and further marketing of the programme. There were 80 places pending and a further 48 should be available by the end of the month. There were two new providers and another two pending to take part in the programme.

Engagement with schools was done to encourage participation in the programme and there was a DfE Early Years pilot that was taking place to encourage schools to be more flexible in the provision; three schools in Hammersmith and Fulham were taking part, which were Vanessa Nursery, Wendell Park Primary and Kenmont Primary.

There was a national campaign for the programme and work was done locally, such as updating the website with the information, information being available through the Family Information Service, a roadshow held in Kings Mall and a video produced showing local providers and interviewing parents which was available on the website for parents to view. A steering group had been set up in November 2012 which met on a monthly basis to consider the programme and a marketing working group was also set up to help promote the offer. There was an IT project underway which would allow parents to check their availability and apply online; it was hoped this would be available in the summer term. In summary, there had been an increase in the number of places and take up and the department was on course in September to meet the 80% target for take up.

The Committee was invited to ask questions and the following areas were discussed:

TYO and Three Year Offer Funding

A member referred to an issue previously raised about children turning three years old before September and asked what changes there were in the

funding for that child; and also about the issue of them blocking a place, whether the projections included all those children. Jackie Devine responded that the issue relating to funding had been raised with the finance department and it was hoped there would be a solution, as at the moment the children turning three years old were funded under the TYO, and there were some sustainability issues with some providers which have been flagged up. Increasing capacity was an issue and had been raised with the DfE as there would be points throughout the year which would be difficult, however at the moment the department was on target for places. Engagement was done with schools as not all families would want a place and it was needed to know why this would be the case, but also when there were additional demands, work would be done with schools so there would be additional places.

The member asked what was the origin of this offer, as before the new legislation came into place two year old children would not be eligible and she felt it implied that there was a need to have a difference between the two offers. She asked where the £3.57 per hour cost came from for three year old offer. Councillor Macmillan noted that a previous update report to the Committee detailed this information; the difference in costing related to the difference in the ratio of carers needed for two year olds compared to three year olds. Jackie Devine explained that the £6.07 per hour costing was set by the DfE for the TYO, based on the ration of 1 carer to 4 children, whereas the for three year olds the ratio of carers was 1 to 8 children. It was asked that feedback on the discrepancies in funding between the TYO and the three year old offer be reported back to the Committee when it had been resolved.

Action: Jackie Devine

The drop in funding costs for three years olds was challenging and concern was raised in the lack of continuity for a child if they had to leave a setting due to drop in funding. Jackie Devine responded that this situation had not occurred where a provider had said they could no longer continue with the provision due to the change in funding, but this issue had been raised with finance as a risk.

Reaching Eligible Families

It was asked if there was a way to reach out to those families who did not claim tax credit and were eligible for the TYO but did not know about it. The Committee was told that even if a family was not on the DWP list there would still be an eligibility test done. There was support in Children's Centres to help families get in touch if they were eligible; families could be signposted to tax credit at child registration in Children's Centres.

Accessibility of the Form

In response to a question on help for families who were unable to complete the forms, it was noted that support was available through the Children's Centres. It was also reported that the marketing working group would need to work on the form as it was not currently available in any other language. It was suggested that work be done with community groups who worked with families in respect of this.

56. CHILDCARE TASK GROUP - UPDATE

Councillor Natalia Perez Shepherd, Chair of the Childcare Task Group, introduced the report which gave an update on the Task Group's work so far. The Task Group had to date met five times, involving great expertise from four expert witnesses from Children's Centres and nurseries; Michele Barrett (Head of Vanessa Nursery), Patricia Logan (Head of Bayonne Nursery), Michael Pettavel (Head of Randolph Beresford Early Years Centre) and Andy Sharpe (Masbro Centre). She also noted that there had been great input from officers and thanked Jackie Devine, Rosemary Salliss, Steve Comber, Sue Spiller and Laura Campbell for their work.

The Task Group had engaged with a wide range of evidence, such as visiting the two Quality Childminders Forums in the borough, conducting an online survey for parents, holding a focus group with parents at the Masbro Centres, inviting representatives to the meetings for in-depth discussion including the Family Childcare Trust, West London Zone, and much more.

Councillor Perez Shepherd invited Members of the Committee to send in any recommendations and feedback in respect of the review and suggestions of any local providers to contact were welcomed. The Task Group was still gathering evidence. The next meeting would be held on 24 February, and the Committee was welcomed to attend.

A member of the public referred to a provider she worked for that was closing its crèche but had not consulted parents on this, noting her disappointment this had happened. It was reported that this provider was not commissioned through the Council and it was thought that the funding was in the school's budget and the school's governing body had made the decision to close the facility. Officers would check whether the funding was through the school and would get back to the member of the public on this.

Action: Rachael Wright-Turner

The Chair referred to how childcare was marketed so that parents could find out what was available and asked that the Task Group looked at this. Councillor Perez Shepherd responded that following feedback as part of the review, one of the recommendations could be that the Family Information Service (FIS) be improved, as the website was not very accessible and the helpline number was costly for some parents. She had requested a report on the FIS in respect of its services available to come to the next Task Group meeting. The Chair also noted that it should be questioned how to reach parts of the community who the Council knew needed the services. Councillor Perez Shepherd also reported that one of the Task Group's suggestions was to make it easier to navigate the pages on the website for parents and that a process map of the parents journey relating to childcare be included to help make it easier to understand, so parents knew what options were available.

The Chair thanked all those involved in the Task Group and invited them to come to the 20 April meeting where the final report would be considered. She also invited all parents, carers and providers to the meeting.

57. WORK PROGRAMME

In respect of the item on the work programme relating to the workload of teachers, one of the co-optees informed the Committee that the DfE had issued guidance and written to schools about this workload issue. It was noted that many headteachers and teachers working at the local schools did not live in the borough, and it was asked that if the Committee wanted input from them at the meeting where this item was discussed, then plenty of notice was given to the headteachers and teachers so that they could plan to come along. It was also suggested that the item be considered at the end of this academic year or at the beginning of the next academic year.

The Chair reported that she had been in discussions with the Youth Council (was previously the Borough Youth Forum) which had been redeveloped so that the young people representatives were now elected from schools. The Youth Council preferred that instead of having a co-opted member on the CEPAC, that a member of the committee visited them to discuss issues. The Chair would attend every other Youth Council meeting to liaise with them. It had also been agreed that the Youth Council would prepare a report for the 20 April meeting on its work and priorities; many of its priorities mirrored those of the CEPAC, such as adolescent mental health. Work with the Youth Council would be done on an issue based way and engagement would take place with young people on issues coming to CEPAC and the other policy and accountability committees.

The Chair also informed the Committee that a report on multi lingual families and how they were supported would come to the Committee at a future meeting. The report would look at the cradle to university experience of multi lingual pupils and how they were supported in a multi lingual environment.

58. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Committee noted that the next meeting would be held on 20 April 2015 at 7pm at Hammersmith Town Hall.

Meeting started: 7.00 pm
Meeting ended: 9.40 pm

Chair

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