MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE  
Tuesday, 2 July 2013 at 6.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors John Paschoud (Chair), Jenni Clutten (Vice-Chair), David Britton, Stella Jeffrey, Stephen Padmore, Jacq Paschoud, Philip Peake, Alan Till and Mark Saunders (Parent Governor Representative) and Alan Hall

APOLOGIES: Councillors Marion Nisbet, Dan Whittle and Sharon Archibald

ALSO PRESENT: Penny Cartwright (School Improvement Officer, Early Years), Alan Docksey (Head of Resources, CYP), John Green (Strategic Leader, School Improvement Team), Andrew Hagger (Scrutiny Manager), Stephen Marks (Police Sergeant) (Metropolitan Police Service), Kym Scott (School Improvement Officer, Early Years), Ian Smith (Director Children’s Social Care), Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney (Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People), Frankie Sulke (Executive Director for Children and Young People), Sue Tipler (Head of Standards and Achievement for CYP), Warwick Tomsett (Head of Targeted Services and Joint Commissioning) and John Turner (Borough Fire Commander) (London Fire Brigade)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2013

Resolved:

The Committee agreed the minutes of the meeting held on 15 May 2013.

2. Declarations of interest

Cllr John Paschoud declared an interest as a trustee of the Ravensbourne Trust

Cllr Jacq Paschoud declared an interest as a trustee of the Ravensbourne Trust

Cllr John Paschoud declared an interest as a relative is an employee of Lewisham Hospital.

Cllr Jacq Paschoud declared an interest as a relative is an employee of Lewisham Hospital.

3. Response from Mayor and Cabinet to matters referred by the Select Committee - Falling Through the Gaps Review

Warwick Tomsett, Head of Targeted Services and Joint Commissioning, introduced the response and assured the Committee that officers would alert the Committee to any impacts on these recommendations due to future savings proposals.

The Committee noted the response, highlighted that it was important to ensure procedures highlighted in the report are maintained as new people enter the system and asked that the presentation be sent electronically to the Committee.
Resolved:
The Committee received the response

4. Response from Mayor and Cabinet to matters referred by a joint meeting of the CYP and SSC Select Committees - Reshaping Youth Services

Warwick Tomsett, Head of Targeted Services and Joint Commissioning, introduced the response and explained that the recommendations had been built into the transition planning.

Resolved:
The Committee received the response

5. Emergency Services Review

The Chair introduced the item and invited Cllr Hall, Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, to provide some background to the review. Cllr Hall highlighted that the review will provide a Lewisham specific view on the comprehensive reforms of Emergency Services and is aimed to flag up concerns and risks.

Geeta Subramaniam-Mooney, Head of Crime Reduction and Supporting People, spoke to the Committee about the potential impact changes to police funding may have on the Youth Offending Service (YOS), including the following key points:

- In 2012 a new act introduced changes to legal aid and sentencing as well as changes to out of court disposals, intending to take into account the severity of the crime, impact on the victims, compliance of defendant and willingness to engage. This will bring more of a restorative justice focus. During sentencing more than 1 referral order will be allowed to encourage proportionate sentencing.

- Historically Lewisham has funded around a third of remand costs to secure units, with the rest covered from Department of Justice (DoJ) and the Youth Justice Board (YJB). However from April 2013 the responsibility for funding the remaining two thirds has been transferred to Local Authorities, although the formula for funding does not cover all the costs.

- Demands for remand can be difficult to predict, as remand is about public protection and risk and is therefore decided on a case-by-case basis.

- Of those young people put on remand, 88% go to Young Offenders Institutes (YOI), 5% go to Children’s Homes and 7% to secure units. Secure units are the most expensive and can cost £580 to £620 per night. There are no secure units or YOIs in Lewisham.

- Changes in legislation also impact on Children’s Social Care, as every young person up to 17 years in a YOI or secure unit now automatically becomes a Looked After Child (LAC). This leads to care planning costs and there is also responsibility for the transition to leaving care. There has been a small budget transferred from the YJB for this but it does not cover the cost.

- YJB modelling has suggested there could be a 10-25% reduction in the need for bed night stays in YOI, Children’s Homes and secure units due to changes
in the approach to sentencing. There has been a downward trend in custody sentences recently.

- Remand is looked at in terms of welfare of the child and public protection rather than in terms of bed and breakfast nights. YOS officers will look for appropriate placements to manage risk, rather than the most cost-efficient placing and funding information is not necessarily known in court. While spending is monitored there is limited control for local authorities over the demand for services.
- In the 2 months since May 2013, Lewisham has needed 433 bed nights and 12 young people became LAC. This is a 1% reduction in same period in 2012.
- Further analysis is needed to see if the funding level from central government is appropriate.

In response to questions from the Committee, officers provided the following information:

- The changes to legislation represent close to £500k of additional pressure.
- There has not been much interaction between those who are already LAC and those becoming LAC due to the changes in legislation as few young people who become LAC due to sentencing come directly into care. Some young offenders may already be LAC. Officers are aware of concerns over the potential for a stigma to develop for LAC as ‘criminals’.
- The educational needs of young offenders in prison is funded separately and young offenders must complete 25 hours a week of literacy and numeracy based education. Any young person leaving custody will attend Abbey Manor before reintegration in to mainstream schools.
- Courts and the judge decide sentences, which stand unless appealed, giving no scope for flexibility for the local authority. Day release (ROTL- release on temporary licence) can be an option used for attendance at interviews/ college etc. The ‘Daedalus’ pilot provided education and training brokerage, this has now ended and a new ESF funded project will replace this.
- The London Policing Model, with its move to neighbourhood teams, means that there must be a police presence across the borough and there will be no change in the YOS team Police officers.

The Committee then discussed its concerns over the transfer of funding for Youth Offending Services, including that current funding will not cover costs, that this could have a large impact on Council finances due to the high costs involved and that savings projected by the Department of Justice are inaccurate and unachievable.

Steve Marks, Detective Sergeant with the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS), spoke to the Committee about the potential impact changes to police funding may have on the engagement work with schools, including the following key points:

- From September the MPS will move to the Local Policing Model.
- Safer Schools Officers, who were attached to Safer Neighbourhood Teams (SNT), will be brought back into one team and will be based in specific secondary schools.
- Primary schools will have as a single point of contact a named SNT officer.
- There will be a slight change to the management structure, with the Safer Schools Officers managed by a separate officer. The Youth Engagement Team
will also be brought into the same team to provide better engagement and communication.

- There will be no change to Youth Offending Service officers.

In response to questions from the Committee, Steve Marks and officers provided the following information:

- Safer Schools Officers will be full time and their hours set in consultation with schools, though they can be removed and placed on other duties if needed.
- The policing models will work in a similar way across London and Lewisham has a reasonable amount of Safer Schools Officers in comparison.
- There will be 8 Safer Schools Officers based between 9 schools. 6 secondary schools are without officers and schools without an officer placed will have a named point of contact from the SNT. Officer placement was decided on a needs basis.
- There will be 8 Safer Schools Officers based between 9 schools. 6 secondary schools are without officers and schools without an officer placed with them did not have an officer there before. Officer placement was decided on a needs basis.
- Over the past 5 years there have been improved relationships between schools and Safer Schools Officers. Flexible approaches have included a police presence at the end of the day at Sydenham Girls School to reassure vulnerable girls.
- Safer Schools Officers will still retain links to the same police teams as previously and the SNT model generally will be enhanced with more officers, greater flexibility and improved capacity.
- Safer Neighbourhood Boards will establish policing priorities and assist in holding the Borough Commander to account. This will start in April 2014.
- Safer Schools Officers are not in schools to control behaviour or enforce discipline as that is a school management responsibility. The role is to build relationships and to ensure that young people learn how to be safe.
- Schools communicate closely with parents, and information provided by SNTs and Safer Schools Officers is also sent to parents.
- The named SNT contact for each school will be encouraged to take responsibility and build a relationship with that school.
- There has been a pilot of this approach rolled out early in Lambeth.

The Committee then discussed the need for Lewisham to learn lessons from the early rollout in Lambeth.

John Turner, Lewisham Borough Commander for London Fire Brigade, spoke to the Committee about the potential impact changes to London Fire Brigade funding may have on the engagement work with young people, including the following key points:

- The Schools Team offers an educational programme free to all London’s primary schools on an annual basis, delivering interactive workshops on fire safety to children in years 2 and 5 and children are encouraged to share important fire safety messages with their friends and family at home.
- The Life Project (Local Intervention Fire Education) is aimed towards at risk and socially excluded young people 13-17, offering an intensive five day course that gives the opportunity to focus on areas like leadership, confidence
building, physical exercise and social skills. From April 2008 to March 2013, 113 Lewisham children took part in it.

- The Fire Cadets have been set up in Bexley and Havering as part of a 2 year roll out programme, although at the moment Lewisham is not included.
- Junior Citizen’s events are multi agency events run by the Police or Local Authority targeting schoolchildren between 9 and 11 years and take them through interactive scenarios from which they learn important safety information.
- Changes to the London Fire Brigade will have a levelling effect on the standard of cover.
- Centrally driven services, such as engagement work, are going to be minimally effected by changes to funding.
- Lewisham has its own fire safety advisor that provides emergency planning information for schools, although the London Fire Brigade can and does provide help and advice on the audit process, advice on access and egress and muster points. It also encourages installation of sprinkler systems. Operational fire staff currently visit schools quite regularly, but with the potential closure of New Cross and Downham Fire Stations there is a risk this will reduce. Schools will also share in the risk of small reduction in cover, proportionate to others.

In response to questions from the Committee, John Turner and officers provided the following information:

- Lewisham has not withdrawn their funding for the LIFE project. The funding had previously come through the Crime Reduction Partnership from the Home Office, but when the Partnership bid for funding from MOPAC now (Mayor’s Office for Policing and Crime) to support the project they were unsuccessful this year.
- Recruitment is currently on hold within LFB, which may carry on for a while. London Fire Brigade values life skills in their recruits so don’t necessarily look to recruit apprentices.

The Committee then discussed the possibility of Fire Cadets being provided in Lewisham as part the Youth Service’s new commissioning approach.

Ian Smith, Director for Children’s Social Care, introduced the response to the Trust Special Administrator’s draft report for South London Healthcare Trust and the NHS in south east London, highlighting the following key points:

- The proposed changes could put relationships with Accident and Emergency at risk, as well as with the Youth MARAC and Safeguarding teams.
- There are currently good relationships between Children’s Social Care and Lewisham Hospital; these would have to be established with all the different hospitals with the problem of potentially different thresholds and working practices with other local authorities.
- The good relations have been built up over a number of years of shared experience (such as going through serious case reviews together), building relations and good communication. These relationships can be built again, although it will take time.
- Currently the out of hours social workers spends a lot of time at the hospital, it is unclear what will happen to this useful link when they have to cover more than one hospital.
• Maternity changes will impact further than just Children’s Social Care and there will be cost implications, although it is hard to gauge what these will be.

In response to questions from the Committee, officers provided the following information:
• Lewisham does work with other hospitals already, but it is more difficult than having a clear one-to-one relationship with Lewisham Hospital. There will need to be intense work to build up these relationships.
• There can be a lack of engagement for young mothers, especially across lots of other hospitals and units. Midwifery teams could be attached to the mother (especially vulnerable mothers) rather than the hospital in order to get them access to local services.

Resolved:

The Committee resolved to submit the information provided at the meeting as evidence for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s Emergency Services Review.

The Committee resolved to propose the following recommendations to Overview and Scrutiny Committee:
• That lessons should be learnt from the experience of the pilot of the London Policing Model in Lambeth.
• That officers should investigate the possibility of Fire Cadets being provided in Lewisham as part the Youth Service’s new commissioning approach.
• The Committee has a number of concerns over the transfer of funding for Youth Offending Services, including that current funding will not cover costs, that this could have a large impact on Council finances due to the high costs involved and that savings projected by the Ministry of Justice are inaccurate and unachievable.

6. Nursery Education and Childcare Review

Sue Tipler, Head of Standards and Achievement, introduced the report highlighting the following key points:
• The use of the terms childcare and early years education has become almost interchangeable as it is mandatory that all early years care includes welfare, learning and development.
• There have been numerous pieces of work carried out nationally looking at this area, including the Review of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) from 2011 which led to a simpler framework for EYFS, ‘More great childcare: raising quality and giving parents more choice’ and new statutory guidance for Local Authorities on the delivery of free early education for 3 and 4 year olds.
• Details of the funding and affordability of the current system are contained in the report
• Details of the statutory framework surrounding provision, including new framework assessments, are contained in the report.
• An outline of the role of Early Years Improvement Team is also in the report.

In response to questions from the Committee, officers provided the following information on funding and affordability:
• When the hourly rates for 3 and 4 year olds were set they reflected the cost experience of provision based on the information that the providers supplied. The hourly rates reimburse providers for providing the 3 and 4 year old entitlement and incentivise by paying more for good and outstanding rated providers. Providers can then charge for those parents buying services beyond entitled hours. These charges will be driven by the circumstances of the individual provider
• The hourly rate for the 3 and 4 year old free entitlement is set on affordability, what the Local Authority can afford to pay from the budget. However when funding is provided by central government then the rate is set by central government, with a national decision on what is affordable.
• The 4 different neighbourhood areas are the Children’s’ Service Areas which are the same as health areas.
• Officers are reviewing the methodology of funding, as the expansion of entitlement to 2 year olds meant there was a chance to look at the level of detail for deciding funding. The previous approach was to fund full time places for those from deprived postcodes and was based on Super-Output Areas.
• There may be a need to look at the current differentiation in pricing between good, satisfactory and outstanding, because as if lots of providers raise their status it could affect overall affordability.
• The provider has to opt in to be included in the free entitlement programme, however many child-minders don’t want to and don’t apply. This is because they can get a better income by going to the wider market. Also child-minders often look after children for 30 to 40 hours a week so looking after a child for 15 hours means they need to fill in gaps. There are currently only 9 child-minders signed up, which is an issue as Lewisham is looking to expand provision for 2 year olds. Officers are trying to encourage more child-minders to sign up.
• Central government currently thinks the amounts devolved are appropriate, if 3 to 4 year old rates need to be higher, then the government needs to give more money.

In response to questions from the Committee, officers provided the following information about the quality of nursery and childcare provision:
• From September 2013 there will be different conditions and any provider will be able to offer free entitlement places, including those rated satisfactory. This could, potentially, cause a lowering of standards.
• Officers have incentivised good and outstanding providers by paying higher rates, however from September it will be possible to use satisfactory providers, so this could create more providers for free entitlement places.
• Providers want to work with Lewisham and they want to support children and provide excellent care. However they are businesses and do need to be sustainable as such.
• There is much good practice of transition from PVIs to schools, much like the primary to secondary transition practices. The relationship with child-minders has to develop to fulfil requirements by Ofsted.
• If the proposed carer to child ratios are not introduced this could have a knock on effect, as paying higher wages for more qualified staff is affordable for providers if there are less staff.
• The Ofsted consultation proposes removing the satisfactory judgement and replacing it with ‘room for improvement’.
• Parents’ awareness of Ofsted judgements may not necessarily influence their choices for nursery provision or child minder. Parents build up relationships with nurseries and schools and a poor Ofsted report will not necessarily put them off. Officers would also be uncomfortable with providing guidance for parents on this issue as ultimately it is their choice for their children.
• The Ofsted framework incorporates areas which forces providers to improve. The Early Years Improvement Team can provide support for this and can put in service level agreements to ensure that providers pay for this support.
• Officers stressed the importance of not providing services in a vacuum, that childcare providers should be aware of how and when to refer on to Team Around the Child (TAC) or Children’s Centres.
• Changes to Ofsted inspection may highlight different quality standards and childcare providers may have geographical and financial limitations that could hinder improvements to quality.
• Lewisham do not carry out quality inspections, although officers will collect evidence to see what support providers need to improve provision. Officers have an understanding and knowledge of what quality is and if it is being provided, but Ofsted are the arbiters of quality.
• If a childcare provider was given a ‘required to improve’ grade by Ofsted it would not be possible for the local authority to prevent it taking in more children. These are private businesses and can look after children if parents are willing to send them there.

In response to questions from the Committee, officers provided the following information on availability and accessibility:
• Historically when a child turns 3 they moved to nursery based provision as this offers a different environment from child-minders. 2 year olds may be better suited to a child-minder environment, hence the need to get them on board to provide the 2 year old free entitlement places.
• A large proportion of parents want to look after their own children, with 45-48% not sending ages 0-5 to free places.
• At the moment officers are looking at the vacancies in the number of childcare places as it may be possible to convert some of those vacancies into people willing to take on 2 year olds. Officers will need to persuade providers of the opportunities presented by the expansion in provision and encourage them to join in.
• The majority of nursery providers will take 2 year olds, but may not have facilities to deal with the increase. There are different ratios of carers to children for 2 year olds and for 3 to 4 year olds which alters the staffing needs and potentially business models of providers.
• Every nursery and preschool must allow children with SEN to attend and be able to show Ofsted this. Early years providers are sometimes not willing to take children with SEN due to levels of care required. Officers are supporting schools to ensure settings do have this capacity. This is being done free of charge until enough capacity is there and then the team will introduce charges, although due to budget pressures charges may need to be introduced sooner.
• There is also support from the educational psychology team within PVIs and the SEN review recommended additional educational psychologists with specific early years needs to support PVIs.
• Many nurseries attached to schools don’t supply full time places and don’t always see the need to do it. Providing lunch can be difficult and they do not
want to go beyond the normal school day for school staff. Doing different hours means different organisational needs outside the normal school day and presents different challenges.

The Committee discussed the usefulness of having officers provide a set of frameworks and benchmarks for questions to nursery providers to use on visits in September. These should include quality standards that providers should aim for, what it is reasonable to expect from them and what they should expect from us.

Resolved:

The Committee resolved to submit the information provided at the meeting as evidence for the review.

7. Outcome of the inspection by Ofsted of the Fostering Service

Frankie Sulke, Executive Director for Children and Young People, introduced the report and highlighted that it reflects very well on the fostering service and that all issues officers had with the wording of the report have been followed up and resolved.

Resolved:

The Committee asked officers to pass on their commendation to all involved in the fostering service for the excellent Ofsted report.

8. Select Committee work programme

The Committee briefly discussed the work programme

Resolved:

The Committee agreed the work programme

9. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

The meeting ended at 9.55 pm

Chair:  
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Date:  
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