

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 18 March 2015 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors John Paschoud (Chair), Brenda Dacres (Vice-Chair), Chris Barnham, Hilary Moore, Jacq Paschoud, Luke Sorba, Alan Till and Sharon Archibald (Parent Governor Representative), Gail Exon (Church Governor Representative) and Monsignor Nick Rotheron (Church Governor Representative).

APOLOGIES: Councillors David Britton, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Joan Reid and Lisa Palin

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Paul Maslin (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Tina Benjamin (Service Manager for Adoption & LAC & LCS (Looked After Children and Leaving Care Services)), Margaret Brightman, Charlotte Dale (Interim Overview and Scrutiny Manager), Alan Docksey (Head of Resources & Performance, CYP), Ruth Holden (Principal, Bonus Pastor Catholic College) (Bonus Pastor Catholic College), Ian Smith (Director Children's Social Care) (Directorate for Children & Young People, LBL), Frankie Sulke (Executive Director for Children and Young People), Sue Tipler (Head of Standards and Achievement for CYP), Katie Wood (Scrutiny Manager), Heather Leatt (Strategic Leader, Secondary School Improvement) and Patrick Ward (Virtual Schools Headteacher)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2015

- 1.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on the 4 February 2015 be agreed as an accurate record of proceedings.

2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1 Councillor Hillary Moore declared a non-prejudicial interest in items 4 and 5 as she was on the Corporation Board of Lewisham Southwark College.

3. Response to the Select Committee - Raising the Participation Age

- 3.1 Sue Tipler, Head of Standards and Achievement, introduced the report to the committee.

- 3.2 In the discussion that followed the following key point was raised:

- Welfare Call was an organisation that tracked and monitored Looked After Children on behalf of local authorities.

- 3.3 **RESOLVED:** That the response from Mayor and Cabinet be noted.

4. Secondary schools improvement

4.1 Sue Tipler, Head of Standards and Achievement, presented the report to the committee and introduced Ruth Holden, Chair of the Secondary Heads Group. During the presentation the following key points were highlighted:

- Table 2 on page 49 of the agenda had an error and the year on year change in St Matthew Academy should be listed as -9.0%.
- Table 3 on page 50 of the agenda had an admission and the 2014 figure for Lewisham should be 51.3%.
- The Council was working more strategically with Head Teachers to address issues of secondary school performance.
- There was a good practice 14-19 year old strategy in place.
- The Council aimed to ensure that all children would have the opportunity to attend a “good” or “outstanding” secondary school in Lewisham.
- The 2014 Lewisham GCSEs results had been worse than expected and there were a number of factors that contributed to this as set out in the report.
- The predictions for the 2014/15 year group were set to rise.
- Mathematics performance had pulled the results down overall, and staffing issues were highlighted as a challenge in this area. There were also recruitment challenges more generally.
- Non pupil premium students were performing worse than the national average whilst pupil premium students were performing slightly better than the national average. Results for both groups, however, needed to improve.
- Head Teachers had formed a small steering group to help share best practice and improve performance across Lewisham secondary schools.
- School leadership was very important at all levels within schools and a middle leaders’ development programme called the “Most Able Project” had been introduced.
- The Council has set a target for a 10% rise in secondary results over the course of this administration. It was conformed that this was 10 percentage points from the 2013/14 baseline in line with the Council’s aspirations to have higher than national average achievement and to be at least at the London average by 2017.

4.2 In the discussion that followed, the following key points were raised:

- No schools were complacent about Ofsted rating and all were committed to achieving or retaining an “outstanding” category.
- The 5 A*- C category for monitoring standards nationally was being replaced with the “progress 8” category which looked at attainment across 8 subjects with higher weighting for Maths and English.
- “Progress 8” was designed to encourage uptake of a broader range of subjects with more emphasis on key subjects such as Maths and English. It included an approved list of subjects that could be counted towards this measure.
- Schools were working collectively. The local authority would intervene if schools were not achieving. Leadership was seen as key.
- The Secondary Heads Group was seen as very helpful. The group met regularly and was divided into sub-groups working on leadership systems

and working in a structured and planned manner. It was also a forum for frank discussion.

- Networks of middle leaders were also meeting and looking at good practice out of the borough as well as learning from each other.

4.3 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

5. Places Planning

5.1 Margaret Brightman, Pupil Places Manager and Alan Docksey, Head of Resources and Performance, Children and Young People, introduced the report to the committee and highlighted the following key points:

- Lewisham faced a number of challenges in the provision of places for primary and secondary schools and the occupancy level of places was very high. This meant that there was very little spare capacity in the system.
- There had been a 31% increase in the birth rate in Lewisham over the last ten years.
- The transfer rate from primary pupils within Lewisham Schools to secondary pupils within Lewisham schools was approximately 75%.

5.2 During questions from members of the committee, the following key points were raised:

- The prediction for secondary school pupil numbers meant that 6 additional forms would be needed by September 2019.
- Similar challenges were being faced by Lewisham's neighbouring boroughs of Greenwich and Southwark.
- The number of pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) was predicted to grow by at least 7.7% over the next 10 years.
- The current uptake of nursery provision for two year olds was set to increase.
- The Community Infrastructure Levy was a planning charge that had been introduced in Lewisham two years ago. It could be possible for money from the charge on developers to be allocated towards capital projects to expand the number of school places available.

5.3 **RESOLVED:** That:

The Mayor be asked to ensure that when sites are being considered for new schools, proposals are subject to wider scrutiny by relevant Councillors, from the earliest possible stage.

The Mayor be encouraged to ensure the Council is fully exploiting the possibility of obtaining capital funding through the Community Infrastructure Levy for new buildings required to increase the number of school places available.

6. Gold Club

- 6.1 Katie Wood, Scrutiny Manager, introduced the report and invited committee members to give feedback on the visits they had undertaken, and to discuss if any additional scrutiny was required.
- 6.2 During the discussion members of the committee noted that they felt there was no need for additional scrutiny on this item at that time.
- 6.3 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

7. Select Committee work programme

- 7.1 Katie Wood, Scrutiny Manager introduced the report and invited committee members to suggest items they may wish to scrutinise in the next municipal year.
- 7.2 **RESOLVED:** That
1. The following suggestions for future work programme items be noted:
 - Child sexual exploitation.
 - Progress to university/employment from key stage 5.
 - Implementation of the children's centres/early intervention savings proposal.
 - Secondary school improvement monitoring.
 2. Any proposed scrutiny on the transition of children with complex needs into adulthood, could include an element of joint working with the Healthier Communities Select Committee.

8. Outcomes for Looked After Children Update

- 8.1 Tina Benjamin, Service Manager, Adoption, Looked After Children Leaving Care Service, introduced the report and introduced Patrick Ward, Virtual School Headteacher. During their presentation to the committee they highlighted the following key points:
- The number of looked after children in Lewisham was 500 and has remained stable in the last year. This is in contrast to the national trend which has experienced an increase in numbers since January 2014.
 - In the last two years, there had been an increase in the number of referrals to Children's Social Care and to children subject to a Child Protection Plan.
 - Placement stability was very important and a very high priority for the Council.
 - Looked after children have had lower health outcomes than their counterparts and raising these was a priority for the team.

- A virtual school had been established in September 2014 to focus on improving attainment for looked after children. The school offered additional support to students and tracked progress, attainment and attendance insuring that any concerns were flagged up immediately.

8.2 In response to questions from members of the committee the following points were raised:

- The virtual school focussed on educational outcomes and contacted every educational setting every day to confirm attendance and any exclusions. Progress was collated termly and intervention plans put in place if a young person was not achieving.

Standing Orders were suspended to allow the business of the Committee to be concluded.

- When individual care plans for young people were drawn up, they could include frequent visits from family members in some cases but it would depend on the specific circumstances. There was also the facility to offer independent visitors to those children who would not have other family contact.

8.3 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

9. Safeguarding Update

9.1 Ian Smith, Director of Children’s Services, presented the report to the committee and highlighted the following key points:

- The number of children in Lewisham subject to a child protection plan had continued to increase and currently stood at 378.
- The continued increase was reflected nationally and was a concern, putting pressure on the service.
- This area was a priority for the Council and the service had increased in size taking on a new team.
- Challenges faced included the difficulties in recruiting social workers.
- Child sexual exploitation was a key issue and the team was focused on prioritising this area.

9.2 **RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

10. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

10.1 The Committee agreed to refer the comments agreed under item 5.

The meeting ended at 10.10 pm

Chair:

Date:
