

Public Document Pack

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 29 January 2014 at 7.30 pm

PRESENT: Councillors John Paschoud (Chair), Stella Jeffrey, Marion Nisbet, Jacq Paschoud, Alan Till, Dan Whittle, Sharon Archibald (Parent Governor Representative), Lisa Palin (Parent Governor Representative), Mark Saunders (Parent Governor Representative) Gail Exon (Church Representative) and Monsignor N Rotheron (Church Representative)

APOLOGIES: Councillors David Britton and Philip Peake

ALSO PRESENT: Petra Der Man (Principal Lawyer), Andrew Hagger (Scrutiny Manager), Jane Hendrie (Lewisham Education Arts Network), Onay Kasab (Regional Officer (Unite)), John Russell (Service Manager, Educational Access), Frankie Sulke (Executive Director for Children and Young People), Chris Threlfall (Head of Education Infrastructure) and Warwick Tomsett (Head of Targeted Services and Joint Commissioning)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 3 December 2013

Resolved:

The minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December 2013 were agreed.

2. Declarations of interest

2.1 There were none.

3. Lewisham Live 2014

3.1 Jane Hendrie, Manager of Lewisham Arts Education Network, made a presentation to the Committee about Lewisham Live 2014 and highlighted the following key points:

- The first collaborative event was held in 2011.
- Since then there have been an increase in the number of partners involved and performances held.
- In 2013 just over 2000 young people performed to about 4000 people.
- Lewisham Live 2014 will have 14 performances involving 13 partners, including LeSoCo (Lewisham and Southwark College)
- Councillors will be invited to performances and are encouraged to raise the profile and promote the event.

3.2 The Committee thanked Jane Hendrie for the presentation and the offer of invitations for Committee members.

4. Savings Proposals Attendance and Welfare Service

4.1 Warwick Tomsett, Head of Targeted Services and Joint Commissioning, introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:

- The £300k saving proposed in the report is additional to the £200k saving that has already been agreed. This represents a 50% reduction in funding and both savings will be implemented at the same time.

- The reduction would bring Lewisham in line with statistical neighbours for average spend per pupil.
- The Council's statutory duties will be protected and core funded, with extra services available for schools to buy in.
- Officers are in consultation with schools over the amounts to be charged for services and different models for supplying these services. The response from schools so far has been broadly positive, schools accept the reasons for charging and are now deciding what they want to do.

4.2 Petra der Man, Principal Lawyer, then offered legal advice to the Committee, stating that while the Committee could hear from any person they wish to with regards to the item, they should consider the impartiality of the person addressing the Committee and whether that person may have a personal interest in the subject. A personal interest could mean that evidence given carries less weight than if it had come from a more impartial source, and that recommendations or advice of the Committee that is based on evidence from an impartial source could be further impacted. Therefore the advice to the Committee would be to take evidence only from a person not affected by the current proposals.

4.3 The Chair then proposed a motion that, in line with the advice, the Committee should only hear from a representative from Unite who has no personal interest in the item. The Committee voted 7 to 2 in favour of the proposed motion.

4.4 Onay Kusab, Regional Officer for Unite, then addressed the Committee and made the following points:

- The majority of the work carried out by officers in the Attendance and Welfare Service is statutory.
- The changes are likely to have a disproportionate impact on schools that have extra needs and staff are not convinced the Pupil Premium will cover the extra costs.
- The savings proposed represent significant cuts which will have an impact on early intervention work. This will mean relying on punishment and not addressing underlying causes of non-attendance.
- There is also concern over selling services to schools, as no schools have committed to buy them as yet.
- The current performance of the service is good, and attendance for Primary Schools is 1st in London and in the top 10 in the UK. There is a fear that changes will result in a drop in performance.
- Concerns of the staff were raised in November, but consultation has been about how to implement the proposals, not about whether implementing them is a good idea. The consultation also starts and finishes before the Mayor and Cabinet decision, which gives a short time for consultation and presents the proposals as a done deal.
- Officers in the Attendance and welfare service are passionate about the service and proud that it performs well. Staff will engage in consultation and have been offered bespoke JCCs.
- Unite will issue a notice of industrial action ballot, which is a protection of the position of the staff and an indication of how seriously this proposal is taken.

- 4.5 In response to questions from the Committee, Frankie Sulke, Executive Director for Children and Young People, Warwick Tomsett and John Russell, Service Manager Early Intervention and Access, informed the Committee of the following:
- The proposals being made are due to the financial pressures resulting from cuts to local authority funding from central government.
 - Attendance is a school responsibility, and Lewisham has previously subsidised this service.
 - In comparison with our statistical neighbours primary school attendance is very good, whereas secondary school attendance is poor.
 - The groups that will be exempted from charges for persistent absentee activity includes Looked After Children, those with a Child Protection Plan, and those involved with Children's Social care, among others. About 25% of persistent absentees would fall in to the group.
 - Research carried out looking at geographical trends in attendance highlighted issues in Downham and Bellingham.
 - Schools can be flexible in their use of the Pupil Premium and Attendance and Welfare services are a valid use for it. Schools are comfortable about having to buy-in services and the Pupil Premium means that schools do have sufficient resources to buy in attendance and welfare services.
 - The Best Value review looking at Attendance and Welfare occurred in 2003, when there was an issue with poor attendance in secondary schools. Funding had been devolved to secondary schools and attendance had improved for 4 years but then got worse. The review found that court preparation work was poor so after negotiation with the Schools Forum extra support was provided.
 - Previously there were not many ways to buy-in Attendance and Welfare services, however there is now a more sophisticated market and schools can buy-in services in a more rigorous way.
 - 3 service options have been made available to schools, 2 are packages and one is spot purchasing. No schools have picked an option as yet and they will need to confirm by April. While there has been no sign-up, no schools have objected and many are evaluating their options before committing. If there is little buy-in, there will still be resources to provide the core service.
 - TUPE will not apply to staff under these proposals.
 - Register checks are a school improvement issue, with schools RAG rated on attendance to identify schools which might have problems.

Resolved:

The Committee agreed to refer the following comments to Mayor and Cabinet:

- The timetable for the staffing restructure of the Attendance and Welfare Service should be reconsidered to ensure that it is aligned with the timetable for schools to indicate whether they intend to buy attendance and welfare services from the Council. The Committee expressed concern that if the current timetable is followed there is a risk that a restructured service will have lost the capacity to meet demand from schools.
- The impacts of the changes made to the service should be monitored closely. This should include the monitoring of all early indicators related to attendance.
- Information should be provided to Mayor and Cabinet on 12 February 2014, including:

- To ensure that the list of the core and chargeable services is specified in full and without ambiguity in relation to the list of vulnerable children.
- Improved comparative information showing the current and proposed provision of attendance and welfare services against other London Boroughs, including the ratio of attendance and welfare local authority staff to pupils and information about the outcomes in comparable boroughs which allocate more and less resources to these responsibilities.

5. Early Intervention and Targeted Support

- 5.1 Warwick Tomsett, Head of Targeted Services and Joint Commissioning, introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:
- There have been a number of changes to the funding of early intervention since 2010/11.
 - The Children and Young People Plan sets out the approach to early intervention in Lewisham.
 - The government's Troubled Families programme is supported through the early Intervention and Access Service and works with 826 families across the borough.
 - Payment by Results has focused the attention of the Council and providers on what they are trying to achieve. The process of developing measures took a year to carry out and involved working closely with providers and partners.
 - Payments are divided into 70% core funding for the service, with 15% payments linked to goals for outreach to targeted families and 15% linked to outcomes.
 - There is robust quality assurance and monitoring of the goals.
 - There are a range of activities provided by Children's Centres that are universal, including activities by voluntary organisations and health visitors.
- 5.2 The Chair then provided information to the Committee about the visit to Downderry Children's Centre that was carried out by a group representing the Committee. The Chair highlighted how the Centre provided a service that was seamlessly linked to school that shared the site and the way it focussed on the whole family's needs.
- 5.3 In response to questions from the Committee, Warwick Tomsett and Frankie Sulke provided the following information:
- Immunisation at Children's Centres depends on the facilities available, as GPs have to be happy with them. However GPs have increasing trust in Children's Centres to deliver immunisations and it is likely that the number of immunisations delivered by Children's Centres will increase. Currently MMR immunisation is good, although numbers are not as good for the follow-up jab MMR2.
 - Partnership working with Jobcentre Plus has worked well.
 - Children's Centres have a named contact within Housing and links to revenue and benefit, as well as early intervention service links also.
 - The term 'worklessness' means the same as 'unemployment'.
 - Sustained goals and achievement is part of the quality assurance process with Children's Centres. Adjustments are made at the end of the financial year to ensure that changes put in place are long term.

- It is difficult to compare early intervention directly with other boroughs as there are no universally used comparative measurements and provision is organised differently according to local needs. However Ofsted will be conducting a 2 day thematic inspection of early intervention which will provide an indicator of the quality of the service.

Resolved:

The Committee resolved to add the result of the Ofsted thematic inspection to the work programme for the Committee in 2014/15.

The Committee agreed to refer the following comments to Mayor and Cabinet:

- The Committee commends the approach taken in embedding the Government's Troubled Families programme within Lewisham's early intervention approach to targeting and supporting vulnerable families.
- The Committee recognises the work staff in the Customer Services Directorate and the Children and Young People Directorate have carried out in improving links regarding housing services. The Committee emphasises the impacts that housing can have during the early years of a child's life. Therefore the Committee recommends that further work is carried out to improve the links between Children's Centres and housing providers, as well as between Children's Centres and the Revenue and Benefits Team.

The Committee agreed to refer the following comments to the Health and Wellbeing Board:

- The Committee notes the important role that Children's Centres play in early intervention and in providing links to public services operating throughout the borough. The Committee feels that there is considerable good work already between health agencies and the Children's Centres but raise the possibility for increased use of Children's Centres to deliver services associated with health.
- The Committee particularly recommends that the Health and Wellbeing Board consider whether there is scope to increase the number of outreach immunisation programmes operating in the borough, specifically within Children's Centres and to increase availability of immunisation for both MMR and MMR 2 in Children's Centres.

6. Primary and Secondary Places Planning

6.1 Chris Threlfall, Head of School Infrastructure, introduced the report and highlighted the following key points:

- This is the first report to the Committee looking at secondary school placement planning.
- The impact of the surge in demand for primary places has not yet reached secondary schools.
- Currently there is a surplus of places in secondary schools, but by 2017 there will be an excess of demand.
- There are site constraints at existing school sites that limit expansion, as well as a limited number of options for developing new sites. Discussions are being carried out about how to bring pockets of council land together for use, possibly for education.

- Additionally, there are restraints on the financial resources needed to meet demand. There has been an additional grant from the DfE to 2016/17, but there will be a £27m shortfall in 2017.
- The lack of space and land is critical, and while there are some plans being put in place to allow for an additional 4 forms of expansions, after 2017 the pressure increases further. Lewisham will likely need a new school by the end of the decade.

6.2 In response to questions from the Committee, Chris Threlfall and Frankie Sulke provided the following information:

- Local authorities aren't required to have a sibling policy, although Lewisham does. Pressures from accommodating siblings have been worse in bulge classes, although the authority has not been put in the position of having to not admit siblings.
- Officers from Planning work closely with CYP officers in the early stages of schools planning.
- Officers can predict pupil numbers using predictions by developers as a baseline to put their own calculations onto. There were 3995 new pupils predicted for 2012/13 and Lewisham had 3887 new pupils.
- There is the possibility of working with other boroughs around secondary schools, as well as looking at more integrated developments. However, boroughs will want to take care of their own situations first before exploring what is happening elsewhere so these opportunities could be limited.

7. **Generation Playclub Update**

7.1 The Committee noted the report.

8. **Select Committee work programme**

Resolved:

The Committee agreed the work programme

9. **Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet**

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

Chair:

Date:
