

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 13 July 2017 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Luke Sorba (Chair), Liz Johnston-Franklin (Vice-Chair), Chris Barnham, Andre Bourne, Councillor Joyce Jacca, Helen Klier, Jacq Paschoud, John Paschoud, Alan Till, Sharon Archibald (Parent Governor Representative), Gail Exon (Church Representative) and Monsignor N Rotheron (Church Representative)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Hilary Moore and Paul Maslin

ALSO PRESENT: Stephen Kitchman (Director of Children's Social Care), Sara Williams (Executive Director, Children and Young People) (London Borough of Lewisham), Emma Aye-Kumi (Scrutiny Manager), Jackie Jones (School Improvement Officer), Michael Roach (Headteacher - John Ball School), Gary Connors (Crime Reduction Service Manager) and Tom Stevenson (Interim Service Manager – Quality Assurance)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 June 2017

- 1.1. The minutes were agreed as an accurate record of the proceedings.
- 1.2. The Committee noted its regret that a small minority of the public had used the meeting to heckle and personally insult a councillor who had attended the meeting. While the committee wanted public representation at meeting, it did not wish to see a repeat of this behaviour.

2. Declarations of interest

- 2.1. None.

3. Responses to Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

- 3.1. No responses were due.

4. Human Trafficking

- 4.1. Tamara Barnett from the Human Trafficking Foundation (HTF) gave a short presentation. The committee heard that HTF was acting as secretariat to the All Party Parliamentary Group on human trafficking and modern slavery, and was working with Local Authorities (LAs) to raise awareness of statutory duties.
- 4.2. Tamara explained that:

LAs have a statutory duty to identify victims of slavery and to complete a National Referral Mechanism (NRM) form. The NRM is a framework for identifying victims of human trafficking or modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support.

- Human trafficking was part of modern slavery but it was also possible to have slavery without trafficking. The example given was of the sexual abuse of British children in Rochdale.
- The Modern Slavery Act created life sentencing for traffickers, as well as a new statutory defence to victims compelled to commit crimes.
- The Modern Slavery Act left gaps around supporting child victims. The assumption was that LA could fund safe accommodation. In reality, victims were vulnerable to going missing and foster carers needed specialist training to prevent children from being re-targeted. No additional funding was available to LAs for this.
- HTF recommended that each LA set up a Task and Finish Group to create simple pathways for victims. The aim would be to look at trafficking, bringing together local NHS, Community Safety and other relevant bodies. HTF would provide free support if requested.

4.3. In response questions, to the Committee heard that:

- The offer of support was noted and would be explored further following the meeting.
- The government was reviewing the NRM in response to criticism. Child Advocates (CA) had been piloted in Croydon. These CA were independent from the LA. It was not yet clear how the use of CA would be rolled out, but the intention was that every child victim would have a CA.
- HTF was keen for LAs to lobby the government for additional funding for LAs supporting trafficked/enslaved children.

4.4. The Committee thanked Tamara for her involvement.

5. Lewisham Learning Partnership

5.1. Michael Roach, Interim Director of Lewisham Learning Partnership (LLP) and Head of John Ball Primary School gave an introduction.

5.2. The following was noted:

- Although the consultation response rate was low, officers were satisfied that every head teacher had heard about the plans, and governors had been made aware through a recent governors' conference. Officers had received overwhelmingly positive feedback from heads and governors.

- All secondary schools were on board. A small minority of primary schools had chosen not to engage.
- Initial funding of £500,000 would be needed. This was comparable to current spend on school improvement.
- The priority for the LLP was firmly on school improvement. Traded services were a possibility as a peripheral activity only.
- Officers were looking to understand why some primary schools had not engaged.
- The Committee was not convinced of the need to create a separate legal entity and requested that officers bring a further report to the Committee in September making the case for doing so.

5.3. It was RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted
2. A further report be brought to Committee in September setting out the business case for creating a legal entity.

6. Safeguarding Services 6-monthly report

6.1. Stephen Kitchman – Director for Children’s Social Care, and Tom Stevenson – Interim Service Manager Quality Assurance presented the report, and explained that:

- Dips in the number of referrals coincided with school holidays
- The issues with white families largely related to entrenched neglect
- Black African families were over-represented in section 47 enquiries. This was being explored further. It was possible that this may be due to cultural discipline styles, as most such cases did not progress to a Child Protection Conference.
- The main issue with White families was entrenched neglect.
- Sexual abuse figures were low and there was concerned that it may be hidden under the blanket of wider neglect.

6.2. The following was noted in discussion:

- Trafficking was automatically considered in all child safeguarding referrals through the Multi-Agency Service Hub (MASH) triage process.
- Work to raise awareness of trafficking and CSE was ongoing and a report to the committee in January would provide more information about this work.
- The “No Wrong Door” policy was helping to identify those who needed additional help at key childhood transition points, notably at age 4 – starting school and at age 11 – transition to secondary school. Improvements were being made to tracking families to make sure that they accessed the support they needed.
- A schools representative had been recruited to the MASH.
- One Member expressed concern about lack of support for parents whose children were subject to care proceedings, citing an anonymous example of a resident of that Member’s ward. The Committee heard that care proceedings are stressful for all concerned and that while the focus had to be on the child’s wellbeing, there was a lot of intervention and signposting

to support the parent(s). The desired result was always to support the parent to make the necessary changes to enable the child to return home.

- No further case reviews were in progress. The reason why some case reviews were not published was usually to protect the identity of the family, particularly if siblings were still living at home.
- No Lewisham officers had been disciplined as a result of any of the case reviews. The focus was on learning to improve future practice.

6.3. It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

7. Child Sexual Exploitation Update

7.1. Stephen Kitchman, Director for Children's Social Care, introduced the report.

7.2. The committee heard that:

- A "trauma informed approach" - an evidence-based intervention that recognises trauma - had been piloted locally, and social workers were trained in this intervention model.
- 13 children aged 9-14 were affected, with the majority being towards the top end of the age range. Most were female.

7.3. It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8. Update on Ofsted Improvement Plan

8.1. Stephen Kitchman - Director for Children's Social Care introduced the report.

8.2. He explained that although the ongoing actions all related to IT, the infrastructure was now running on a modern platform. All Social Workers had access to mobile phones and iPads to enable remote working, were undertaking a mandatory training programme, and felt well supported by the digital team. The committee heard that delivering the required IT improvements was a struggle within the resource envelope.

8.3. It was RESOLVED that the report be noted.

9. Select Committee work programme

9.1. The Scrutiny Manager introduced the item and highlighted upcoming items for the next meeting.

9.2. Officers suggested that the social care roadmap item be incorporated into savings/budget proposals rather than as a stand-alone item.

9.3. The committee requested:

- a report on school funding once more information was available about changes to the National Funding Formula. Date tbc.
- A briefing on provisional GCSE and KS2 SAT results at the meeting on 13 September.

- A report setting out the business case for LLP being a legal entity be considered at the meeting on 13 September.
- That the pay settlement for teachers be considered as part of the indepth review of recruitment and retention of teachers.
- That a report on Human Trafficking be considered at the meeting on 11 December.

9.4. It was RESOLVED that the following be added to the work programme:

- A report on school funding/ changes to National Funding Formula. Date tbc.
- A briefing on provisional GCSE and KS2 SAT results at the meeting on 13 September.
- A report setting out the business case for LLP being a legal entity be considered at the meeting on 13 September.

10. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

10.1. No referrals were made.

10.2. The Chair thanked Sharon Archibald, who was resigning from her role as parent-governor representative for primary schools, for her 6 years of service.

10.3. The meeting ended at 9.23 pm

Chair:

Date:
