

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 12 June 2019 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Luke Sorba (Chair), Caroline Kalu (Vice-Chair), Colin Elliott, Octavia Holland, Coral Howard, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Hilary Moore, Jacq Paschoud, John Paschoud, Lilian Brooks (Parent Governor Representative - Primary Schools), Kevin Mantle (Parent Governor Representative - Special Schools), Kate Ward (Parent Governor Representative - Secondary Schools), Gail Exon (Church Representative) and Monsignor N Rotheron (Church Representative)

APOLOGIES: None

ALSO PRESENT: Sara Williams (Executive Director, Children and Young People) (London Borough of Lewisham), Emma Aye-Kumi (Scrutiny Manager), Catherine Bunten (Commissioning Manager), Ruth Griffiths (Service Manager for Access Inclusion and Participation) and Angela Scattergood (Director of Education Services, Education Standards and Inclusion) (Director of Education Service, Education Standards and Inclusion)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2019

The Chair opened the meeting and changed the order of business to consider Item 5 – Select Committee Work Programme after Item 8 – Early Help Service Design Proposals.

The Chair invited the committee to consider the minutes of the last meeting held on 30 April 2019.

There were a number of matters arising as follows:

1. Members sought clarity from officers as to whether clear baselines and targets would be set for increase take up of 2, 3 and 4 year old places, including 30 hours funding (cf paragraph 8.2.4 of the minutes). Officers confirmed that outcomes were framed in a general way without numerical targets, and more detail was set out in the performance framework and reported to the Mayor and Cabinet. The Executive Director for Children and Young People agreed to provide a written response to the committee providing a more detail on this point.
2. There had been discussion at the last meeting of groups of pupils at some schools that had 'bucked the trend' and done better than expected. Members requested that this be looked at forensically to see what good practice could be shared between schools. More information would be provided in the Annual School Standards Report 2018/19 which would be considered in March 2020. Members felt this was too long to wait. Instead this information should be provided in September when the Education Strategy and Annual Report on Attendance and Exclusions would be

presented, and the new Director of Lewisham Learning would be in attendance. Members were asked to bear in mind that the new Director of Lewisham Learning would be very new in post in September.

It was AGREED that

1. the minutes be agreed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings
2. the Executive Director for Children and Young People provide a written response to the Committee detailing what baselines and targets had been set and, where detailed targets were not set, how outcomes would be properly measured.
3. The reports pertaining to education matters currently scheduled for consideration in September include details schools that had bucked the trend and seen historically underperforming groups of pupils perform better than the same groups in other schools, and what steps had been taken to achieve this improvement.

2. Declarations of interest

Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin declared an interest in respect of Items 6 and 8 (Early Help). Cllr Johnston-Franklin is a non-executive Director representing the Council on the Youth First board.

3. Responses to Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

None.

4. In-depth review - exclusions from school - final report

The Chair tabled a draft set of recommendations for consideration. These had been circulated by email ahead of the meeting and incorporated comments made at the previous meeting as well as those made by email. He explained that he had not ranked them in priority order for two reasons. Firstly he did not feel able to do so without hearing from the committee, and secondly, he felt being given a low priority would mean the recommendation was less likely to be implemented.

The following was noted in discussion:

1. Members supported the addition of a recommendation to incorporate Black culture and achievements into the curriculum.
2. One Member requested a timetable to accompany recommendations 2 and 6.
3. Referring to the main report, one Member requested a breakdown of exclusions from special schools by school, in order to be sure that children were not being excluded due to behaviour reasons if that behaviour was a result of their additional needs eg SEMH.
4. It was noted that until 2015/16, New Woodlands had been used as a primary phase PRU as well as a special school, and this, together with an administrative error in the recording of fixed term exclusions, contributed to the previously high levels of exclusion. New Woodlands is no longer used as a PRU and fixed term exclusions are thought to be due to safeguarding reasons. Officers would provide more information, including a breakdown of fixed term exclusions by special school.

5. Figures were not available on the number of pupils with EHCP plans in mainstream schools being excluded for a fixed term. This level of detail was not collected as national reporting obligations did not extend this far.
6. The number of permanent exclusions for assaults on adults in Lewisham schools had risen from 2 in 2016/17 to 5 in 2017/18. One Member asked that the report reflect that this is a national trend, and not unique to Lewisham.
7. Draft recommendation 10 should be strengthened so that effective interventions are promoted to schools, rather than signposted. There was discussion about whether or to promote specific providers by name. Members felt that the recommendation could name the two groups that had contributed to the review but should only go as far as to recommend commissioning interventions from groups "such as...".
8. Recommendation 8 should be reworded to reflect the committee's wish for the PRU to be re-sited.
9. Members were happy for the Scrutiny Manager and Chair to amend the report and recommendations to reflect the comments made at the meeting, and to make a referral to Mayor and Cabinet to consider the review and recommendations. A response to the referral was scheduled into the work programme for consideration at 16 October meeting.

It was RESOLVED that

1. the report and recommendations be agreed subject to the requested changes being made
2. Officers to provide a breakdown of fixed term exclusions by special school

5. Select Committee work programme

The Chair introduced the item.

It was noted that:

1. An information item on unregulated education settings would be available in December.
2. There was little appetite from the committee to visit a Children and Family Centre or Youth First as part of the Early Help review
3. In respect of what the report on the Early Help review in July would cover, members were keen to understand
 - the population needs assessment
 - relative poverty in different parts of the borough
 - the prioritisation process

It was RESOLVED

1. that the work programme be noted
2. that the Early Help review report in July cover
 - the population needs assessment
 - relative poverty in different parts of the borough
 - the prioritisation process.

6. Lewisham's Early Help Approach: Update and Priorities in 2019/20

Catherine Bunten, Service Manager – CYP Joint Commissioning, introduced the report.

She invited questions from the Committee and the following was noted:

1. 'step up' means escalating needs beyond universal services, for example targeted family support or statutory intervention such as Children's Social Care. 'Step down' is the reverse.
2. Child and adolescent mental health is included in the population needs assessment. It has to be as it is interlinked with other aspects. Obesity was given as an example.
3. The approach to prioritisation had yet to be finalised. Some priorities are defined in the CYP plan, for example Domestic Violence. Other areas are discretionary, and prioritisation may be best done on the basis of geographic need.
4. Some members wanted to look at ranking priorities at the next meeting on 11 July.
5. Referring to the report paragraph 7.1. This should be amended to read "Achieving our ambitions for Early Help in Lewisham is a longer term approach, and requires a continual commitment to learning and change. There are, however, several actions *we plan to* take in 2019/20 to immediately deliver improvements in our offer, and have a positive impact for our children and young people. These are:..."
6. Referring to the report paragraph 7.1 bullet 4, it was clarified that a Youth Engagement Guarantee would mean making sure that young people are included in designing services.
7. Some members were disappointed that an Equalities Impact Assessment had not been appended to the report.
8. Members stressed that access to information about the offer, all the way from universal services to targeted and statutory support is key. Services are only effective if they are used, so signposting the community to available services, and ensuring that other services, such as GPs, Councillors, schools, etc is crucial if they are to access it.
9. The Family Information Service website is up to date and a leaflet explaining what is on offer has been produced.
10. While Members considered the estimated preventative savings at paragraph 6.30 in the report to be useful, it was noted that when considering budget cuts, this information is not usually provided. It was felt that this information would provide useful context when deciding whether to take budget cuts.
11. There was concern that high thresholds for targeted services may result in unmet needs. Examples were given of children starting school without being 'school-ready', despite having accessed universal services such as nursery, and of older children reaching crisis point because of late diagnoses of speech and language needs.
12. Officers stressed that the ambition was for a seamless offer, and committed to add "school readiness" to the training needs analysis mentioned in the report at paragraph 7.1 bullet 9.
13. One member felt that 13 priorities was too many, and suggested breaking them down into short/medium/long term.

It was RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted
2. Prioritisation be considered at the next meeting
3. School readiness be included as a training need.

7. Exclusion of the press and public

There were no members of the press or public in attendance.

8. Early Help Service Design Proposals (Part 2)

Item 8 was considered in private in accordance with Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

It was RESOLVED that a referral be made to Mayor and Cabinet, the terms of which can be found under Item 9.

9. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

It was RESOLVED that a referral be made to Mayor and Cabinet to advise that this Committee feels that the objectives of the Early Help Review cannot be met should the decision be made to make the cut of £800,000 that was proposed in the budget report last year under cut proposal: "CYP 7: Early Help Redesign".

At the time of considering the budget in September 2018, the Committee felt it was unable to properly assess the impact of the cuts without information on what the redesigned service would look like. As a result, the decision whether to support the cuts was deferred to allow for the completion of the Early Help review.

Although the review has yet to be completed, the Committee now has sufficient understanding to lead it to the conclusion that the objectives of the Early Help Review will not be met should the decision be made to make the cut.

The meeting ended at 9:15pm.

Chair:

Date:
