

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Tuesday, 10 March 2020 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Luke Sorba (Chair), Caroline Kalu (Vice-Chair), Colin Elliott, Octavia Holland, Coral Howard, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Paul Maslin, Hilary Moore, John Paschoud and Monsignor N Rotheron (Church Representative)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Jacq Paschoud and Gail Exon

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Chris Barnham (Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Performance), Ruth Griffiths (Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation), Matthew Henaughan (Service Manager, CYP), Lucie Heyes (Director of Children's Social Care), Pauline Maddison (Interim Executive Director Children and Young People), Sandra Roberts (Director of Lewisham Learning), Angela Scattergood (Director of Education Services) and Katie Wood (Scrutiny Manager)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 23 January 2020

RESOLVED that the minutes be agreed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

2. Declarations of interest

None

3. Responses to Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

None were due

4. Annual school standards report 2018/19 (primary, secondary, post-16, AP)

4.1 Angela Scattergood, Director of Education Services, and Sandra Roberts, Director of Lewisham Learning presented the report to the Committee and tabled an amended table to replace that on page 56 of the agenda report, a copy of which will be included in the agenda documentation. In the discussion that followed, the following key points were raised:

4.1.1 Lewisham Learning had been looking further afield than Lewisham to find good practice in particular around under-achieving groups. There would be a fact finding visit to LB Haringey looking at the work they had undertaken on narrowing the attainment gap and in particular looking at Black Caribbean children.

4.1.2 Research had just been published on under-achieving groups in London schools. It was called "Boys on Track". There was a strong focus on Black Caribbean boys and White Free school meals boys. One of the authors would

be working with the Council and Lewisham would use this research to inform strategies.

- 4.1.3 In terms of timescale, there was a focus on current Year 11s for some actions but the timescale for the overall plans for cross-borough work for under-achieving groups would be hoped to be introduced for September 2020.
- 4.1.4 A member of the Committee was concerned that results being affected by high-achievers leaving Lewisham for outside borough provision should not be presented as an excuse for results in Lewisham, as it was a small number of students. The Interim Executive Member for Children and Young People felt it was important to show how Lewisham children achieve as well as how Lewisham schools achieve. It was important to build the community's confidence in Lewisham schools so they best served the Lewisham population.
- 4.1.5 A member of the Committee highlighted that whether or not the borough was losing high achieving pupils after Key Stage 2 would not be a factor in explaining the Lewisham Progress 8 scores as that represented progress and took into account the base level, and the Lewisham figures had been the worst in London.
- 4.1.6 A member of the Committee raised a concern that the gap in attainment was widening further rather than decreasing and that a more definite timeframe was needed.
- 4.1.7 In the planning and consultation for the new plans for a strategy for working with lower-achieving groups, the Council had carried out substantial consultation including meetings with parent groups, the Young Advisors, and groups such as Lewisham Education Group and Parent Engage.
- 4.1.8 A member of the Committee highlighted that it was very challenging for the secondary schools if they had a concentration of children with higher needs, and that although it should not be seen as an excuse, the additional challenge needed to be recognised. Proactively trying to get Lewisham families to educate their children in borough was also important.
- 4.1.9 There had been a 10.1 per cent increase in the number of Lewisham residents choosing Lewisham schools in the last year and celebrating this success was important.
- 4.1.10 A member of the Committee raised a concern that in respect of EYFS profile, the achievement gap between those on FSM and those who were not was a lot higher than the national average. This was in context of the overall results for EYFS being very good. It was also highlighted that the Key Stage 2 Lewisham writing scores were much lower than other areas.
- 4.1.11 The Committee heard that progress in writing had been a big challenge and there was a targeted programme for schools making the least progress. The numbers achieving the expected level was not much different to the national average however the number obtaining "greater depth" was lower than average and more work would be done from a younger age. Improvements had been made and Ofsted had recently recognised progress in writing in a number of Lewisham schools.

4.2 RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5. Exclusions from school in-depth review - six month update

5.1 Ruth Griffiths, Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation, presented the report to the Committee. In the discussion that followed, the following key points were raised:

5.1.1 **A member of the Committee requested that figures on BAME representation on Primary Fair Access Panel, Independent Review Panel, and School Governing Bodies be shared with the Committee.**

5.1.2 There was a strong emphasis on community group and parent engagement as well as information sharing between Primary and Secondary schools.

5.1.3 Abbey Manor College will match a pupil's individual curriculum for pupils in Year 10 and 11 to ensure they are able to study for the same qualifications they were due to sit in their mainstream setting. Last academic year some students at Abbey Manor were able to sit up to eleven GCSEs.

5.1.4 The Council supported parents through the exclusion process and had a dedicated officer who spoke to parents and was able to provide support and guidance.

5.1.5 A member of the Committee asked how the Council encouraged parents to work with schools around areas such as discipline. In response, the Committee were informed that this area has also been raised as an issue in the parent consultation and parents had requested more clarity. A new round of workshops had therefore been arranged focused on Primary to Secondary transition and clear information and guidance. Prendergast Ladywell had been selected for a pilot scheme which included parent training and working with targeted children and families on communication and expectations.

5.1.6 **The Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation would provide information to the Committee on whether information on the legal process was in the information packs supplied to parents.**

5.1.7 Managed moves were strongly discouraged by the Local Authority in Year 11. Officers scrutinised the census to check for any signs of off-rolling and would then follow up with schools. **The Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation would check with Governors Services and provide an update to the committee that information was presented to Governors in a consistent way with clear guidance.**

5.1.8 There were building improvement works in progress at Abbey Manor College. There was monitoring of funding and space available.

5.1.9 Abbey Manor College had a broad curriculum with a strong focus on English and Maths. Students on average studied for five GCSEs

5.1.10 **The Council's Inclusion Strategy would be reported to the Committee later in the year. Members requested that this could be added to the June committee with the draft headlines shared in April.**

5.2 RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Council's Inclusion Strategy would be reported to the Committee later in the year. Members requested that this could be added to the June committee with the draft headlines shared in April.
- 2) That the Head of Access, Inclusion and Participation would provide information to the Committee on whether information on the legal process was in the information packs supplied to parents.

6. How living in temporary accommodation affects children - final report and recommendations

- 6.1 Luke Sorba, Chair of the Children and Young People Select Committee introduced the report to the Committee and highlighted the draft recommendations in the report. In the discussion that followed, the following points were raised:
- 6.1.1 A member of the Committee commented that an additional recommendation recognizing the excellent work taking place in some schools and suggesting this good practice should be shared and replicated in other schools should be included.
 - 6.1.2 **Members of the Committee requested an additional recommendation be added that the information from Shelter in Appendix D on page 101 of the report should be updated to ensure accuracy and circulated to all schools in the borough.**
 - 6.1.3 In particular it was highlighted that references to “Connexions” should be removed as well as the information being thoroughly checked to ensure it was fully up to date. It was suggested that Shelter could be contacted as they may have a more up to date version available. It was felt that the addition of this recommendation would therefore encompass the point around good practice being emulated.
 - 6.1.4 **The Committee agreed that it would be good to strengthen the wording of recommendation 5 as it was really negative for children to have to share bathrooms, kitchens or toilets with strangers. Lewisham currently had 61 families in this position. The Housing Team should look at the prioritization process to ensure this did not happen.**
 - 6.1.5 There were 2250 households including 4500 children in temporary accommodation in Lewisham.
 - 6.1.6 The Chair reminded the Committee that once recommendations were made to the Mayor and Cabinet, the Committee would receive an initial response and then a 6-month update.
 - 6.1.7 The Committee’s focus on consultation and engagement with residents was used to shape recommendation 7.
 - 6.1.8 **Members of the Committee suggested adding an additional recommendation for a post looking at the welfare of children who are schooled in Lewisham but place outside the borough.**
 - 6.1.9 **The Director of Education said it should be Children and Young People Directorate and not Children’s Social Care listed in recommendation 3. This was agreed by the Committee.**
 - 6.1.10 **Recommendation 5 should be amended to add “This is because” and then list the reasons as listed in the report such as attainment.**
 - 6.1.11 The Chair announced that Lewisham Homes was working with Goldsmiths University and St Dunstan’s School to provide homework clubs for children in temporary accommodation in Lewisham. There was a pilot due to start in March.
- 6.2 RESOLVED that the following recommendation should be amended:
- 1 Recommendation 3 should be amended to read “Children and Young People Directorate” instead of “Children’s Social Care”
- 6.3 RESOLVED That the following additional recommendations be added to the Committees report:

- 1) That the information from Shelter in Appendix D on page 101 of the report should be updated to ensure accuracy and circulated to all schools in the borough.
- 2) That an additional post be created focused on looking at the welfare of children who are schooled in Lewisham but placed outside the borough.

7. Safeguarding Services 6 monthly report

7.1 Lucie Heyes, Director of Children's Services, introduced the report to the Committee. In the discussion that followed, the following key points were raised:

- 7.1.1 There had been improvements in the MASH in terms of quality and timeliness of decision-making. The service had carried out a lot of quality control and auditing to ensure consistence in the thresholds for providing help.
- 7.1.2 A member of the Committee was concerned regarding the caseload of assessment teams and asked about capacity and resources. In response the Director of Children's Service outlined that the recalibration of caseloads in the MASH meant that more families were coming into Children's Social Care as the thresholds had been lowered rather than because of an increased demand. This has resulted in the service assessing approximately 40 – 50 more children each month compared with one year ago. The service was concentrating on ensuring those families could be moved out to other services such as Early Help as quickly as possible and transferring where necessary for longer term services. The caseloads were therefore now coming down and around 15-20 per social worker which is appropriate but being carefully monitored.
- 7.1.3 A member of the committee highlighted the strengthened early help provision and asked officers if they were confident that the results they had predicted would be realized. The Interim Director of Children and Young People's Services responded that it would be likely to take up to a year before the structural changes would be embedded and the results would be demonstrated.
- 7.1.4 A member of the Committee felt that case studies would be useful to see in reports alongside statistics.
- 7.1.5 The Workforce Development Strategy was in the process of being drawn together. It looked at whether Lewisham as a borough was competitive to attract and retain social workers. The Committee heard that social workers wanted to be safe and supported. There was a range of social worker positions including: newly recruited; managerial; and middle tier social workers. The middle tier was the most difficult to recruit to.
- 7.1.6 The Family Support Feasibility Review was also in the process of being produced. This looked at the overall costs of family support in order to consider how best to allocate financial resources. The short-term priority was getting the Family Group Conference Service running by 1st April 2020.

7.2 RESOLVED that the report be noted.

8. New safeguarding arrangements

- 8.1 Pauline Maddison, Interim Director of Children and Young People's Services presented the report to the Committee. During the discussion that followed, the following key points were raised:
- 8.1.1 The Lewisham Safeguarding Children Partnership (LSCP) report in the agenda paper was listed as "Draft", the Interim Director of Children and Young People's Services confirmed that this was not a draft and was the final version.
 - 8.1.2 A member of the Committee asked how the role of Independent Scrutineer of the LSCP would impact on the Council scrutiny through the Children and Young People's Select Committee. The Interim Director of Children and Young People's Services responded that it was a statutory required post under the new arrangements and was looking at the ways the partnership was organized.
 - 8.1.3 **The Interim Director of Children and Young People's Services would update the Committee as to who would be involved from the Housing Team or local Housing Providers.**
 - 8.1.4 That was a high level of domestic abuse in Lewisham and many of the cases had domestic abuse as a key factor. This was likely to be something that Ofsted would look at closely.

8.2 RESOLVED

- 1 that the report be noted
- 2 that the Interim Director of Children and Young People's Services update the Committee as to who would be involved from the Housing Team or local Housing Providers.

9. Select Committee work programme

Standing Orders were suspended at 9.25pm.

- 9.1 Councillor Luke Sorba introduced the report to the Committee and asked members to think of items they would like on the work programme for the 2020/21 municipal year and possible ideas for task and finish groups. The following key points were raised:
- 9.1.1 A number of topics were raised as possible options for Task and Finish groups including: domestic violence; youth violence; and food poverty. The Scrutiny Manager highlighted that under the new arrangements, members would put forward their own proformas for topics direct to Overview & Scrutiny. Support would be available to help members with the forms.
 - 9.1.2 A possibility for an item on the CYP Select Committee agenda could be a report on unregulated educational settings.
 - 9.1.3 It would be important to have a focus on results and achievements. This could be focusing on the provisional results much earlier in the municipal year such as September so there is more time to act.
 - 9.1.4 It would be good to have an item showing the longer-term school improvement strategy.
 - 9.1.5 Members agreed that there needed to be a rethink in the way the Committee received information on school results including when they receive them and how they received the information and triangulated the evidence with other sources.

9.1.6 The Interim Director of Children and Young People Select Committee highlighted that it would be possible to bring the provisional results to Committee in September, however it was not until the validated results were available when benchmarking data would be available. The earliest possible time was likely to be the third week in January.

9.2 RESOLVED that comments made by the Committee would be incorporated into the work programme report at the first meeting of the CYP Select Committee of the 2020 municipal year.

10. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

The meeting ended at 9.45 pm

Chair:

Date:
