

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 26 November 2020 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Luke Sorba (Chair), Caroline Kalu (Vice-Chair), Colin Elliott, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Hilary Moore, Jacq Paschoud, Lionel Openshaw, Oluwafela Ajayi (Parent Governor - Special Schools), Monsignor N Rotheron (Catholic Church Representative) and Clive Caseley (Parent Governor - Secondary Schools)

APOLOGIES: Councillors Octavia Holland and Lilian Brooks

ALSO PRESENT: Emma Aye-Kumi (Scrutiny Manager), Councillor Bill Brown (Chair of Overview & Scrutiny), Councillor Sophie Davis (Vice Chair Overview & Scrutiny), Pinaki Ghoshal (Executive Director for Children & Young People), David Austin (Director of Corporate Services), Brenda Bartlett (Service Manager, CAMHS) (SLAM), Harold Bennison (Director of CAMHS) (SLAM), Sir Norman Lamb (Chair of Governors) (SLaM) and Omer Moghraby (Lead Clinician) (CAMHS - SLaM)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September

- 1.1 The Chair opened the meeting and welcomed Oluwafela Ajayi to the Committee. Fela had recently been elected as the co-opted Parent Governor Representative for Special Schools.
- 1.2 Lilian Brook and Councillor Octavia Holland had sent apologies for non-attendance. Councillors Jacq Paschoud and Sophie Davis had sent apologies for lateness.
- 1.3 It was noted that Councillor John Paschoud was in attendance, as was his entitlement under the council's constitution. The Chair granted him the right to participate in the discussion and ask questions.
- 1.4 The Chair changed the order of the meeting to hear items in the following order:
 1. Minutes of the last meeting
 2. Declarations of Interest
 3. CAMHS update and Q&A with Sir Norman Lamb
 4. BAME attainment
 5. Budget Cuts
 6. Response to Referrals
 7. Work Programme.
- 1.5 The minutes of the 21 September meeting were agreed without discussion.
- 1.6 RESOLVED that the minutes of the last meeting held on 21 September 2020 be agreed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

2. Declarations of interest

RESOLVED that the following declared interests be noted:

1. Cllr Luke Sorba is Lewisham Council's appointee on the Council of Governors of the South London and Maudsley (SLaM) NHS Trust (relevant to Item 5 – CAMHS update)
2. Councillor Liz Johnston-Franklin is the Lewisham Council Representative on the Board of Youth First (relevant to Item 4 – Budget Cuts)
3. Councillor Jacq Paschoud is a Trustee of the short breaks provider previously known as the Ravensbourne Project. (relevant to Item 4 – Budget cuts)
4. Councillor John Paschoud, spouse of Councillor Jacq Paschoud, declared his spouse's interests as he is required to do under the constitution.

3. Responses to Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

- 3.1 Councillor John Paschoud, who had been a Member of the Committee when the matter had been referred and was now attending the meeting under Standing Orders, shared his views on the response as follows:
- the number of IT fault 'events' was evidence of a serious situation and had not been properly remedied;
 - Paragraph 5.6 of the response appeared to show a marked decrease in the number of events whereas in fact the latest figure represented a much shorter reporting period than previous figures;
 - That IT systems elsewhere do a better job of supporting Children's Services;
 - The Council's IT offering may be better than it once was, but it was not as good as it could or should be. Expectations were too low;
 - That serious IT breakdowns were being considered as acceptable;
 - The Committee should continue to monitor IT performance in the context of scrutinising the work of the Children and Young People's Directorate.
- 3.2 The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Performance responded that he would follow up with the Director of Children's Social Care to find out whether the IT continued to cause problems. His feeling was that whereas in the past IT was mentioned regularly as a barrier to performance, he was hearing fewer complaints and therefore the problems may have been resolved.
- 3.3 RESOLVED that
1. The Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Performance would explore the concerns raised Committee and email his findings to the Committee. The concerns were:
 - a) the number of IT fault 'events' was evidence of a serious situation and had not been properly remedied;
 - b) Paragraph 5.6 of the response appeared to show a marked decrease in the number of events whereas in fact the latest figure represented a much shorter reporting period than previous figures;

- c) That IT systems elsewhere that do a better job of supporting Children's Services;
 - d) The Council's IT offering may be better than it once was, but it was not as good as it could or should be. Expectations were too low;
 - e) That serious IT breakdowns were being considered as acceptable.
2. The CYP Select Committee would keep under review IT performance insofar as it affects the work of the Children and Young People's Directorate.

4. Budget Cuts

4.1 Pinaki Ghoshal – Executive Director for Children and Young People gave a brief introduction to the Budget Cuts report. He explained the approach taken as follows:

1. The report had been prepared prior to the government's Comprehensive Spending Review that had been announced the previous day. Some information was therefore slightly out of date.
2. Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic had created a budget shortfall of £68m of which approximately £30m was due to costs and the remaining circa £38m was a result of lost revenue. While some central government funding was being provided, this would not be enough to meet the entire cost.
3. Additionally there would be a CYP budget overspend of slightly less than £10m at the end of this financial year, and some would flow into the next financial year, largely due to the cost of social care placements for children.
4. Even without the additional financial pressures brought about by Covid-19, there was expected to be a £40m budget cut over the next 3 years, of which £34m was to be made in the next financial year.
5. Officers had taken a themed approach to finding ways of making savings and cuts, which each Executive Director leading on a theme that was not directly related to their business area.

4.2 In response to questions from the Committee, the following was noted:

1. In recent months there had been a reduction in the unit cost of residential placements, as well as a reduction in the number of children requiring residential placements. These measures were aimed at reducing the overspend on placement costs, and not at reducing the budget.
2. Regarding the proposed saving on short breaks provision, one Member was concerned that overly tight gatekeeping was preventing parents from being able to access the short breaks provision that they needed. Officers responded that the reduction was relatively small, and some of this would be met in 3 ways:
 - a. by looking at provision costs as costs varied greatly between providers
 - b. by organising staffing in a more efficient and effective way, and not using social workers by default
 - c. Looking to increase the uptake of personal budgets to give families more choice, rather than having to use the local authority offer.

3. Members had concerns about cutting funding for transition services when moving from children's to adult's social care. The Committee heard that work was underway to set up a new transition service, which would utilise staff with adult's social care experience as well as staff with children's social care experience, and would be working with families with children from age 14+. It was hoped that this would lead to a better transition experience for families.
4. The saving of £1.2m relating to partner contributions to children in care placements combined 3 elements
 - a. Housing Benefit – there were currently young people in care eligible for but not claiming the benefit. Systems had been corrected to ensure the council no longer pays the provider for the equivalent amount of the benefit.
 - b. There had been positive conversations with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) around health contributions from children in care where there is a health element to their care costs. Historically the council had not been good at getting health contributions for complex care placements. Recently the percentage of the CCG contribution was increasing.
 - c. Education contribution to costs had previously been met from the general fund whereas they should have been paid from the High Needs Block (HNB) of the Designate Schools Grant (DSG). The HNB was already projected to overspend, so shifting this cost would place additional pressure on the HNB. However, this raised the wider question of why the HNB funding that the council receives is not adequate to meet the needs of Lewisham children and young people. This was a pan-London problem.
5. It had been announced in the CSR that the Troubled Families Grant (TFG) would be extended by another year. The government had also indicated a commitment to continuing this funding in some form.
6. The Chair asked that a briefing note be prepared to inform Members how the CSR announcements would affect the council's budget. The Chair was advised that the detail relating to Lewisham would not be available in time for the next Mayor and Cabinet meeting.
7. There had been an increase in permanent social workers employed in Lewisham, with 25 newly qualified social workers being recruited straight from university. The service was on target to reach 80% permanent staffing by Christmas, and 90% permanent staffing by next year. Initially, the recruitment of large numbers of inexperienced social workers would present a challenge, and experienced agency staff had been brought in to support them during the initial stages. Ultimately the recruitment of NQ social workers presented an opportunity for the council to 'grow its own'.
8. New joiners were being attracted to Lewisham's clear practice model, learning reflective culture, support offer and stated ambition. These were all bigger attracting factors than pay alone.
9. Increasing the number of in-house foster carers would begin to deliver savings in year 2. Work was needed across the wider environment, to ensure the authority has a systemised approach to marketing itself and

recruiting foster carers, including encouraging existing agency foster carers to come in house. For this to happen, Lewisham's offer would need to be more attractive than that of an agency. Currently the percentage of in house foster carers was very low, so it was felt that bringing about an increase by the end of year 2 should be readily achievable.

10. Cllr Bill Brown, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny MOVED that a referral be made to Mayor and Cabinet in the following terms:

In upcoming Budget reports could the following information be included;

The impact of a proposed cut on the users of a service.

The impact of a proposed cut on the staff of a service.

The impact of the cut on the service overall.

The cumulative impact of the cut on LBL as a whole.

11. This proposal was SECONDED by Cllr Jacq Paschoud and the Committee unanimously RESOLVED to make the referral.

12. The Chair noted that "the government had spent the last 10 years underfunding, as a political choice, local authorities and this has done great harm to children and young people and is nothing short of a national scandal. I commend officers for doing their best to mitigate the effects of this".

4.3 RESOLVED that

1. the following referral be made to Mayor and Cabinet:

The Children and Young People Select Committee requests that the following information be included in all upcoming the Budget Cuts reports:

1. The impact of a proposed cut on the users of a service
 2. The impact of a proposed cut on the staff of a service
 3. The impact of the proposed cut on the service overall
 4. The cumulative impact of the cut on the London Borough of Lewisham as a whole.
2. That the Committee be provided, in due course, with a briefing note setting out the implications for Lewisham of the Comprehensive Spending Review.

5. **CAMHS update and Q&A with Sir Norman Lamb, Chair of SLaM Council of Governors**

- 5.1 The Chair welcomed Sir Norman Lamb – Chair of South London and Maudsley (SLaM) NHS Trust Council of Governors, Dr Omer Moghraby – Lead Clinician, CAMHS, Brenda Bartlett – Deputy Director of CAMHS, Harold Bennison – Director of CAMHS, to the meeting.

Harold Bennison gave a brief presentation summarising the information in the report (slides were tabled), followed by Sir Norman Lamb addressing the committee. It was noted that:

1. SLaM NHS Trust was one of four pilot areas across England trialling a new approach called the Parent and Carer Race Equality Framework. This involved mental health trusts working with communities to identify gaps in the data and getting a clear picture of where inequality exists eg young black men are disproportionately affected by compulsory detention under

- Mental Health Act and more likely to be subject to restraint on the ward. By fully understanding the existing data and identifying where data gaps exist, the Trust will work to address and hopefully eradicate the inequalities.
2. The other 3 Trusts involved in the pilot are located in Greater Manchester, East London and the East Midlands.
 3. The Board of Governors was working on a vision and had reached broad agreement that directly confronting race dimension would be a core element of the vision. This was important both in terms of services to communities, but also internally as an organisation. Addressing over-representation of some ethnic groups within the organisation in disciplinary action was given as an example.
 4. Reverse mentoring for all members of the Board was being put in place. All Board members would be linked up with a member of BAME staff to properly understand the experience of BAME staff within the organisation.
 5. The Trust was working alongside local authorities and had been involved in a prevention summit, taking the approach of mental health as a public health issue. Communities were experiencing rising stress due to the fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impact on employment, health, education, isolation, etc. By April the Trust expected to have an action plan in place, covering whole of South London. Nationally, SLaM NHS Trust was leading the way on dealing with the mental health impact of the pandemic.
 6. CAMHS was working in schools, using CBT in primary schools for whole class work, with good results and the potential to roll out nationally
 7. Australia had created a model youth service called 'Head Space' which was easy access, non-stigmatised and available on a self-referral basis. It covered all issues of importance to children and young people, in addition to mental health. Currently in the UK too many people are waiting too long or not getting onto waiting list because of high thresholds. Sir Norman argued that the government should fund something like Head Space in the UK. Stepped timely care is better than over pathologising and sitting on a long waiting list. Early access to help is essential for good mental health outcomes.

5.2 A Q&A followed and the following was noted:

1. There had been a significant improvement in both the number of children and young people on the waiting list and the waiting time, compared with this time last year. The waiting time was reducing incrementally and activities to improve the waiting list were sustainable. Staff now understood that although it is usual for service users to have to wait, it is not acceptable.
2. Those on the waiting list were being contacted to see if they needed to be reprioritised.
3. Primary to secondary transition was a key trigger point. The work of the Mental Health Schools Team (MHST) was starting to impact and the MHST had received a high number of referrals.
4. Sometimes the police responded to situations particularly those involving young black men and mental health difficulties, in a way that caused the situation to escalate. There was a known link between poor mental health and gang activity.
5. The future of improved mental health support depended on collaboration with the police, local authority, community and other stakeholders. SLaM

was already working with police and other stakeholders, in recognising how mental health issues might present and how the impact of their power might affect the young person.

6. Where appropriate, providing young people with visual aids such as sunflower lanyards or cards that say, for example, "I've got autism" could be useful in helping the police to recognise that they may need to change their approach.
7. The Budget Cuts item on the agenda includes a proposal to have closer collaboration between the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and CAMHS front doors. Lewisham Children's Commissioners have looked at what has been done in Croydon and Kingston with referrals going through MASH then being referred on to CAMHS if there is a mental health component. As long as it is properly planned and staffed, it can work well. To be successful, large groups of referrers, for example schools or GPs, would need to be involved well in advance so that they understand the new system. It would need to be as easy as possible for referrers to refer difficulties on to CAMHS so that when the referrer approaches the front door, any redirecting happens internally. Ultimately the goal would be to enable self-referral. There is already a self-referral pathway for eating disorders.
8. SLaM has increased funding to CAMHS and frontline staff and there is a tangible difference within the service. Culture change within the service has attracted quality staff. Funding remains a challenge.
9. £500m announced in the Spending Review is not expected to be enough to meet the increased demand that has come about because of Covid.

5.3 The Chair thanked Sir Norman for his involvement and invited him to attend future committee meetings where CAMHS featured on the agenda, to which Sir Norman agreed.

5.4 RESOLVED that the information in the report and points raised in discussion be noted.

6. BAME attainment

6.1 Pinaki Ghoshal, Executive Director for Children and Young People, gave a short presentation on BAME attainment (slides were tabled).

The following was noted in response to questions from the Committee:

1. One Member asked what the link was between the curriculum and lower attainment rates for Black Caribbean children and young people (CYP), and why this group was more affected than other BAME CYP.
2. Research showed that lack of Black role models in positions of power in institutions had a profound effect on young black people, especially those identifying as Black Caribbean. There was a disconnect between their identity and their relationship to people in power.
3. Community and family dynamics also played a key role. 3rd and 4th generation Chinese were not at the same level of educational attainment as 1st and 2nd generation. Poverty and racism were just some of a range of

indicators combining to have a disproportionate effect on Black Caribbean CYP relative to other ethnic groups.

4. Feedback from residents regarding Black History Month indicated that the teaching of Black History still had a Western, traditional focus.
5. Overall the national curriculum had shifted towards traditional-style learning or facts and figures, with less investigating, however schools had some flexibility to decide content and focus within the curriculum. The Council could work with schools to generate discussion about what would be relevant to the local population, but it could not mandate what schools teach.
6. Officers were actively engaging with Black Caribbean communities with a view to creating a new supplementary school.
7. £100,000 has been invested by Lewisham Learning to the programme to embed race equality in schools
8. Embedding race equality in schools is a 3 year programme. Success in 3 years would include
 - a. Disproportionality in exclusions no longer existing
 - b. Raised attainment – this would take longer than 3 years but should be able to see clear improvement in outcomes across all key stages within 3 years
 - c. Destinations – softer indicator but hope to hear positive stories about where students go on to after school
9. When restrictions are lifted, visits to schools would be arranged to give Committee Members the opportunity to talk to schools and pupils to hear about what changes are being made.
10. Schools were working on a pledge and once this was finalised, it would be displayed prominently in schools and publicised by the council.

6.2 RESOLVED that the information in the report be noted and visits to schools be arranged in 2021 (if local Covid restrictions permit) for Committee members to talk directly to schools about how they are responding to the 3 year race equality action plan for schools.

7. Select Committee work programme

7.1 The work programme was noted, and it was agreed that consideration of the officer response to the referral that this Committee had made to the Mayor and Cabinet on “How Living in Temporary Accommodation Affects Children and Young People” be postponed to March 2021 to allow the Committee to consider it at the same time as the scheduled 6 month update.

7.2 RESOLVED that consideration of the officer response to the referral that this Committee had made to the Mayor and Cabinet on “How Living in Temporary Accommodation Affects Children and Young People” be postponed to March 2021 to allow the Committee to consider it at the same time as the scheduled 6 month update.

7.3 The meeting ended at 9:25pm

Chair:

Date:
