

MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE

Thursday, 10 November 2016 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillors Hilary Moore (Chair), Chris Barnham, Andre Bourne, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Helen Klier, Jacq Paschoud, Alan Till, Sharon Archibald (Parent Governor Representative) and Monsignor N Rotheron (Church Representative) and

APOLOGIES: Councillors Luke Sorba, David Britton, Simon Hooks and Gail Exon

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Paul Maslin (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) and Emma Aye-Kumi

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2016

RESOLVED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 12 October be agreed as a true and accurate record and the Chair be authorised to sign them.

2. Declarations of interest

The Chair declared a non-pecuniary interest as a Governor for Lewisham and Southwark College.

The Chair declared a pecuniary interest as an employee of Barking and Dagenham College.

Monsignor Rotheron declared a non-pecuniary interest as Governor for Christ the King College.

Sharon Archibald declared a pecuniary interest as a member of staff at Lewisham and Southwark College.

3. Transition from Primary to Secondary School In-depth Review - Evidence Session

The Chair welcome Elizabeth Adewale, Young Advisor, to the meeting.

Emma Aye-Kumi, Scrutiny Manager, briefly introduced the report and invited the Committee to put questions or comments to Jackie Jones, Service Manager for School Improvement and Intervention.

The Committee noted that:

- The Transition Working Group (TWG) first met in the summer to look at producing a document to establish common principles and to support schools to self-evaluate their transition process.
- The TWG met again in November to look at how to improve the transition process for Yr 6 pupils from the moment they know which school they have been allocated, and also at how schools can work within their 'clusters' to become the secondary school of choice for the primary schools in the area.

- Recent changes in secondary leadership in the borough had presented the opportunity for improvement
- Pupils going out of the borough for their secondary education did so through choice and not necessity, since there was sufficient capacity to provide places for all Lewisham-resident secondary-age pupils.
- From a financial perspective, school places needed to be filled and stable for schools to function effectively since school budgets were linked to pupil numbers.
- Transition was a school-led process and therefore it was for individual schools to decide how to measure success and gather feedback.
- There were examples of excellent practice for SEN children with ECHP plans. School SENCOs from Year 6 and Year 7 meet every summer to share information about children with SEN to support their transition from primary to secondary schools
- Currently Lewisham schools have a common transition day in the summer term for all Year 6 children moving on to Lewisham secondary schools.
- It was felt that the most appropriate way of improving transition within the school-led system was to highlight issues to the schools' governing bodies and leadership teams and encourage them to oversee and scrutinise good practice.
- It should be borne in mind that some parents would opt to go out of borough regardless of the quality of Lewisham schools as it may make geographical sense to do so. Similarly some parents would seek out faith schools, single sex schools, grammar schools. High speed links to Kent could mean that the journey to Kent grammar schools could be quicker than a bus ride within the borough.
- Some parents were put off applying to schools owing to concerns about the safety of the surrounding area and the school journey, rather than due to concerns about the school itself.
- The current Year 7 cohort was the first to have experienced 2 years of the new curriculum and officers were confident that the issues of drift in KS3 would be resolved as schools were becoming more adept at mapping backwards from the GCSE requirements to KS2. This was also helped by improving communication and relationship building between primary and secondary schools.
- Officers were confident of a big culture change happening in the borough's secondary schools that would soon improve results and in time, parental perceptions.
- Some members felt that more advertising of Lewisham schools was needed, and that secondary schools could begin to create a 'buzz' by being proactive about going into primary schools at an earlier point, such as Year 4 or 5. Many schools were already doing this. The policy of allowing out of borough secondary schools to advertise in Lewisham Life was questioned.
- The proposed Citizen Free School had yet to secure a site, and so there was no confirmed start date.
- Key measures of improved transition would be a mixture of hard data – for example more students staying within the borough at secondary level, academic progress, improved behaviour and attendance, and soft data that captured the pupil and parental views.
- The consistent message coming out of all of the evidence was that there could be no one-size fits all approach to transition and that the individual

governing bodies would need to drive and measure improvements to transition

- In respect of the significant increase of homework between Year 6 and 7, some members had concerns that too much homework in KS3 was limiting children's opportunity to experience extra-curricular activities such as scouts, dance classes, etc. Officers gave assurances that there were many enrichment opportunities available within the secondary school offering, and explained that homework levels were a decision for individual schools and their governing bodies.
- Head teachers were reported to be working collaboratively, rather than in competition with each other, with a view to raising teaching standards and sharing expertise. The Secondary Challenge was mentioned which had been launched the previous week.

Elizabeth Adewale, Young Advisor, made a number of comments based on her recent experience of transition, both between primary and secondary school, and when transitioning to sixth form college. The Committee heard that, in her experience, taster days were very helpful. She had found the lack of challenge in Year 7 to be so demotivating that she struggled to pick up in Year 8. She recalled that she had found the volume of homework overwhelming compared to primary school. She added that the Year 9 and the start of GCSEs had come as a shock, having spent two years coasting. Elizabeth raised the issue of teaching to pass exams and said she would have preferred a broader education rather than only learning what was needed to answer an exam question. Alongside this, she would have liked career sampling to start sooner, the Committee heard.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the contents of the report, verbal evidence from officers and Young Advisors be noted.
- 2) That Kate Bond, Head of Standards and Achievements, would circulate the Secondary Challenge leaflet to the Committee.

4. Children's Social Care Ofsted Action Plan

Stephen Kitchman, Director for Children's Social Care, briefly introduced the report. The Committee heard that plans to implement the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) were going well and that it was on target to be launched slightly ahead of the revised deadline of 31 January 2017.

RESOLVED: that the contents of the report, particularly the extension of target completion dates, be noted.

5. Children's Social Care Workforce Strategy

Stephen Kitchman, Director for Children's Social Care presented the reported and introduced Heather Brown, the Development Manager with lead responsibility for the Workforce Strategy.

The following was noted in discussion:

- Referring to para 3.1.4 *Agency Pay Rates* on page 82 – of the 162 agency qualified social work placements in the year to 31 March 2016, there were around 50 agency staff in post at any one time
- The aim was now to reduce the numbers of agency staff. The Committee heard that Reed was the preferred supplier and that there would be no charge by Reed for any social worker moving into council employment after 3 months of having worked for Lewisham through the agency.
- Approximately 23% of the 250 posts were filled by agency staff. This compared well with London comparators, but the aim was to reduce this to as near to zero as possible
- Members sought clarification of “Resignation” in respect of the table on Page 78, headed “Number of leavers by reason 2015/16”
- The area of least stable staffing was those working with children in the community. This was thought to be due to it being one of the most challenging and stressful areas, dealing with child protection and court proceedings. Work was being done to build resilience and to upskill in this area.
- A mixed-age workforce was better for succession planning.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the report be noted and the Committee agreed to receive annual updates on the development and impact of the Children’s Social Care Workforce Strategy.
- 2) That the Director for Children’s Social Care provide clarification of “Resignation” in respect of the table on Page 78, headed “Number of leavers by reason 2015/16”.

6. Further Education - update on area reviews

Monsignor Rotheron briefed the Committee about a meeting he had attended.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

7. Update on Meliot Road Savings Proposal

Stephen Kitchman, Director for Social Care, introduced the report and explained that recent changes to care proceedings had significantly reduced the need for expert witnesses, resulting in the process become much shorter. This meant that there was reduced need for the Meliot Road Family Assessment Centre in its current format, demand for supervised contact of children with significant family members was ongoing and as such it was proposed that this would be the primary focus of the Meliot Centre moving forward.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that the report be noted.
- 2) that the Committee agree to review the full savings report to Mayor and Cabinet at the 11 January 2017 Select Committee meeting.

8. Select Committee work programme

Emma Aye-Kumi, Scrutiny Manager, summarised the upcoming items for the next meeting, including the Meliot Road item that was agreed by the Committee under item 7. The Committee was advised that in order to allow sufficient time to properly consider all of the upcoming items on the work programme, the item on human trafficking should be moved to March.

RESOLVED:

- 1) that an item on the Melliott Road savings report be added to the work programme for January.
- 2) That the item on Human Trafficking Organisation – external speaker be moved to March.

9. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet

There were no referrals.

The meeting ended at 8:46pm.

Chair: _____

Date: _____