

# **MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE**

**Tuesday, 28 February 2017 at 7.00 pm**

PRESENT: Councillors Hilary Moore (Chair), Luke Sorba (Vice-Chair), Chris Barnham, Andre Bourne, Liz Johnston-Franklin, Helen Klier, Jacq Paschoud, Alan Till, Sharon Archibald (Parent Governor Representative), Gail Exon (Church Representative), Monsignor N Rotheron (Church Representative) and Kevin Mantle (Parent Governor representative for special schools) (Parent Governor Representative)

APOLOGIES: Councillors David Britton and Simon Hooks

ALSO PRESENT: Stephen Kitchman (Director of Children's Social Care), Warwick Tomsett (Head of Targeted Services and Joint Commissioning), Sara Williams (Executive Director, Children and Young People) (London Borough of Lewisham), Councillor Paul Maslin (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People), Tina Benjamin (Service Manager for Adoption & LAC & LCS (Looked After Children and Leaving Care Services)) and Nikki Sealy (LB Lewisham)

## **1. Minutes of the meeting held on 11 January 2017**

Apologies were received from Councillors Britton and Hooks, and from Cllr Bourne for lateness.

The Chair opened the meeting and advised that the Human Trafficking item 5 on the agenda had been cancelled due to unavailability of the guest speaker. This would be rescheduled for later in the year as an all-Member briefing, to include non-councillor members of CYP Select Committee.

The Chair changed the order of the agenda as follows: item 7 – Looked After Children Annual Report - to be taken after Item 4.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 January be agreed as a true and accurate record of the proceedings.

## **2. Declarations of interest**

In respect of Item 6 – Childcare Strategy Update – Monsignor Nicholas Rotheron declared a non-pecuniary interest as the Chair of Governors of St Matthew Academy.

In respect of Item 6 – Childcare Strategy Update – Councillor Jacq Paschoud declared a non-pecuniary interest as Trustee of the Ravensbourne Project.

## **3. Response to referrals from this Committee**

- 3.1 Sara Williams, the Executive Director for Children & Young People, presented the response. She advised that whether to appoint a children's champion was a "political" decision. The Lead Cabinet

Member for Children and Young People and the Executive Director for Children and Young People currently play an overview role. The Executive Director outlined the various complaints mechanisms available to children and young people, including externally provided advocacy services that the council procures from a voluntary sector organisation.

### 3.2 **RESOLVED:**

That the response be noted.

## 4. **Transition from Primary to Secondary In-depth Review - draft final report**

4.1 Emma Aye-Kumi, Scrutiny Manager, introduced the report and at the Chair's request, tabled draft recommendations for the Committee to consider.

4.2 Members made the following comments:

- Add St Matthew Academy to the list of all through schools at para 5.3
- Post-publication, Monsignor Rethon hoped the report would be turned into a booklet for wider circulation
- Add a recommendation that ties the recommendations into the remit of the Transition Working Group
- Recommendation 4 - change "higher" to "high"
- Recommendation 13 – add "schools are reminded to ensure that" to the beginning of the recommendation
- The Young Mayor's Advisors (the Advisors) preferred the word "rigorous" to "challenging" in recommendation 12. They also cautioned against 'pigeon-holing' children too early by applying labels such as "most able"
- The Advisors welcomed the recommendation to give equal importance to academic and pastoral needs, citing an example of PHSE classes being dropped in favour of additional academic classes
- Change to "vulnerable and disadvantaged" in recommendation 9 to mirror the wording used throughout the report.
- The Committee had found no evidence that all through schools do transition better. It was noted that the secondary cohort in an all through school tends to be much larger than the primary and so most secondary pupils come new to the school in Year 7. In addition some primary pupils at all through schools choose to go elsewhere for secondary school.
- The Committee heard that despite the primary and secondary phases of all through schools Trinity and St Matthew Academy being separate, there were still benefits to transition, such as cross teaching, sharing staff, continuity of curriculum and challenge.

### 4.2 **RESOLVED:**

That, subject to the amendments detailed above, the report and recommendations be agreed and submitted to Mayor and Cabinet for consideration and response.

Members thanked the officers, schools, Advisors and fellow members who had visited schools for their time and involvement in the review.

## **5. Human Trafficking - external speaker**

CANCELLED due to the external speaker being unavailable.

## **6. Childcare Strategy Update - including increase provision for 3 year olds**

6.1 Warwick Tomsett, Head of Commissioning, Strategy and Performance and Nikki Sealy, Acting Manager of the Early Years Quality and Sufficiency Team, introduced the report. The following points were noted:

The increased provision for 3 year olds came about as part of the government's back to work agenda and not about improving the quality of the Early Years Foundation Stage, and therefore the focus was on ensuring sufficiency of places and encouraging uptake.

The value of the increased childcare could be as much as £5000 per annum to low income families and monitoring was underway to ensure that providing additional places for 2 year olds did not impact on the universal offering of 15 hours for 3 and 4 year olds.

6.2 In response to concerns about school nursery classes closing, the Committee was advised that:

- the reasons for school nursery classes closing varied - undersubscription and building problems were cited as examples
- changes to the funding regime were a further threat to school nursery classes since schools were not able to cross-subsidise the nursery from the rest of the school's budget, but it was hoped that the flexibility to offer longer sessions would appeal to working parents and may improve take up of places
- All early years childcare providers are required to following the early years education framework, and Ofsted judges them against this framework
- Attainment at the end of Reception is good in Lewisham, which is attributable not only to schools, but also to early years provision
- Take up by SEND children has been low. The council is improving its support to settings to make reasonable adjustments
- More work needed to be done to share information about available facilities with parents of SEND children
- A marketing campaign was underway to promote take up – 14% of 3 year olds and 37% of two year olds were not using their entitlement.

6.3 **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

## 7. Looked After Children Annual Report

7.1 Stephen Kitchman, Director of Children's Social Care, and Tina Benjamin, Service Manager – Looked After Children, highlighted the key points in the report. The following points were noted:

- Officers were confident that relationships were improving with Youth Offending Services despite the complicating factor of many of Lewisham's Looked After Children being located out of borough. Officers considered that a follow-up Ofsted inspection was a possibility for the Lewisham Youth Offending Service
- Members wanted the report to look more widely at all destinations, in addition to numbers of LAC going to university
- the DfE would be launching progress indicators specifically for Looked After Children which ought to better reflect progress and achievement
- Members wanted the report to describe the cohort, and use some anonymised examples that reflected progress, even if that progress could not be captured by looking at results, as well as case study examples of successes of the virtual school. Officers cautioned that the cohort of looked after children was small and therefore care would need to be taken to protect the anonymity of the cohort
- 9 of Lewisham's Looked After Children were currently in Youth Offending Institutions either on remand or serving sentences.

7.2 **RESOLVED:** that:

- 1) the report be noted
- 2) destinations of all Looked After Children be included
- 3) description of the cohort, and examples of progress, be included.

## 8. School Funding

8.1 Sara Williams, Executive Director for Children and Young People, Introduced the report. The following points were noted:

- the deadline for responding to the Schools National Funding Formula: Stage 2 consultation was 22 March. It was suggested that Members may wish to publicise this to parents within their wards
- Reasons for the deficits varied from school to school, including over-optimism of pupils numbers on the roll and issues with budget management.
- The most common problem area was staffing costs in secondary schools
- No more £500k+ deficits were expected but deficits could mount quickly
- Officers were working with Heads and governing bodies to have tight control of their school budgets
- The council can withdraw delegation from maintained schools and take back responsibility for budget management but in reality the council is not resourced to do that. The council was working with schools to get their budgets in shape

- Some schools have a lots of senior staff at the top of the payscale which can be problematic for budget management
- Budget problems are felt more acutely in smaller schools and some schools were looking at sharing posts and costs, reducing natural wastage etc
- Members flagged the risk of children with additional needs that are below the threshold for support being seen as a drain on a schools' finances. Officers explained that targets and smart use of support staff for these children was key and that inclusive schools were of benefit to everybody. For children with SEN below the threshold, quality teaching was the biggest influence

8.2 The time being 21:24 it was **MOVED**, **SECONDED** and **RESOLVED** that standing orders be suspended to allow for business to be continued.

8.3 **RESOLVED:**

That the report be noted.

## **9. 2017/18 Draft work programme**

9.1 Emma Aye-Kumi, Scrutiny Manager, introduced the work programme report. She advised that the work programme for 2017/18 would be agreed formally at the next meeting, which would be the first of the new municipal year. The date for that meeting, and membership of the CYP Select Committee, would be confirmed following the Council AGM on 27 March. Members were asked for their suggestions for the incoming Select Committee work programme.

Members discussed topics for in-depth review. Officers advised that the suggested topics of school deficits/ budgets, autism, Education Commission review would be duplicating work that was already in progress.

There was support among Members for a review of teacher workload. Officers advised that the Council's influence in this area was limited as teacher workload is subject to national guidance.

Members were also supportive of a review of recruitment and retention of school staff, both primary and secondary, and felt a review could cover issues such as perception of Lewisham schools, transport, and housing.

9.1 **RESOLVED:**

That the draft work programme be noted and that a review of recruitment and retention of staff in Lewisham schools be scoped in time for the first meeting of the next municipal year.

## **10. Referrals to Mayor and Cabinet**

See Item 4.

The meeting ended at 10.06 pm

Chair:

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Date:

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