

Children and Young People Select Committee

**Council Chamber
7pm on 15 March 2023**

IN ATTENDANCE: Councillors Luke Sorba (Chair), Johnston-Franklin, Coral Howard and Jack Lavery, Mosignor Nick Rotheron and Clive Casely

ALSO JOINING THE MEETING VIRTUALLY: Reverend Erica Wooff and Bryan Strom

APOLOGIES: Councillors Luke Warner (Vice-Chair), Carol Webley-Brown and Yemisi Anifowose

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Chris Barnham (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Community Safety), Pinaki Ghoshal (Executive Director for Children and Young People), Angela Scattergood (Director of Education Services), Katy Brown (Advisor to the Young Mayor, Access Inclusion and Participation), Jacob Sakil (Youth Support Worker, Young Mayor's Team), Benjamin Awkal (Scrutiny Manager), Nidhi Patil (Scrutiny Manager), Mervyn Kaye (CEO – Youth First), Val Davison (Chair – Youth First), Gülen Petty (Assistant CEO – Youth First), and Susan Rowe (Lewisham Education Group and Lewisham Black Parent Forum)

ALSO PRESENT VIRTUALLY: Cllr Jacq Pashchoud

NB: Those Councillors listed as joining virtually were not in attendance for the purposes of the meeting being quorate, any decisions taken or to satisfy the requirements of s85 Local Government Act 1972.

Introduction

The Committee agreed that Cllr Paschoud be given speaking rights.

Item 1 – Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2023

RESOLVED

- The minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2023 were agreed as an accurate record.

Item 2 – Declarations of interest

There were no declarations. Cllr Howard noted they worked with Youth First in their capacity as a ward councillor.

The Committee agreed to take item 4 before item 3.

Item 3 – An Update on Youth First

Witnesses

Pinaki Ghoshal, Executive Director for Children and Young People

Val Davison, Chair – Youth First
Mervyn Kaye, CEO – Youth First
Gülen Petty, Assistant CEO – Youth First

Val Davison and Mervyn Kaye introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- 3.1. Non-statutory youth services were in a parlous state nationally, but Youth First (YF) had succeeded by not only surviving but also growing its services since it was 'stepped out' in 2016. This was achieved thanks to the hard work and willingness to adapt of staff and the support of the council and other partners.
- 3.2. Since its creation, YF had developed new and innovative services, both in collaboration with the council and independently with other partners.
- 3.3. It was difficult to obtain funding for youth services. Nevertheless, YF's funding bids were around twice as successful as the national average.
- 3.4. YF had identified focus areas which were aligned with the council's corporate priorities and would enable more-focused income generation and funding applications.
- 3.5. YF was hopeful of securing funding to launch an education and employment scheme later in the year, which would open doors for young people who were often missed by other schemes and support them to develop soft and hard skills.
- 3.6. YF's change from mutual organisation to charity was to ensure it was able to attract non-council funding.
- 3.7. Youth voice was hardwired into the organisation, which coproduced its offer with young people. YF had obtained the agreement of the Charity Commission to include staff and young people as beneficiary trustees.
- 3.8. YF required stable, long-term funding from the council in order to secure independent funding.
- 3.9. The council's support could also help YF secure independent funding. By working together, the council and YF had secured capital funding for the Riverside adventure playground, for example.

The Committee then put questions to the witnesses. The following key points were noted:

- 3.10. A £200k saving against the budget for youth services – of which YF was the largest provider – was included in the council's agreed 2023/24 budget. However, exactly where that saving would be made had not yet been determined.
- 3.11. Capital investment in The Dumps adventure playground had been agreed. Engagement with residents and other stakeholders regarding the use of that funding was planned. There was no capital funding earmarked to improve the Ladywell adventure playground, but the condition of the site would be considered under the Play Strategy.
- 3.12. YF needed assurance over a period of time – e.g. use of an adventure playground for a longer period – in order to secure independent

funding. For example, high net worth individuals were willing to provide funding for five to ten years.

3.13. Long-term adventure playground (APG) management was to be subject to a tendering process. However, this had been delayed by the fact the council did not own the land on which one of the borough's APGs was situated. YF was both a youth work and play provider.

3.14. YF was established to support the Council and would continue to do so even under a short-term contract extension. However, the lack of clarity regarding the organisation's future was a barrier to recruitment and retention.

3.15. YF was observing a high level of food poverty and helping to feed young people. There was anecdotal evidence that feeding young people increased participation in youth services and improved community safety and young people's outcomes.

3.16. There was a waiting list of almost 100 young people for one-to-one mentoring following the first year of its availability, despite only limited promotion of its availability. Approximately half of referrals were received from Family Thrive, and the other half from a range of sources including GPs, mental health services, schools, youth workers and self-referrals. Outcomes Star was used to measure the impact of one-to-one youth work; its application showed that most young people made good progress against their objectives. However, due to a higher than anticipated level of need, young people were receiving support for longer than was expected when the service was commissioned and, consequently, fewer young people were being supported than originally expected. The success of the scheme presented an opportunity to add further schemes aligned with the needs of young people, such as regarding education and employment or emotional wellbeing. YF was pursuing a £400k funding bid to expand one-to-one provision.

3.17. The Chair summarised that the case had been made for longer-term funding to provide stability for youth services and capital funding was needed to release facilities. He thanked Merve for his work in Lewisham over the past 18 years. Merve encouraged councillors to continue to visit youth services after he left the borough.

RESOLVED

- That the report be noted.

ACTION

The Executive Director for Children and Young People to inform the Committee of where the £200k youth services saving is to be made, once decided.

Item 4 – Amplifying the Voices of Children and Young People

Witnesses

Katy Brown, Advisor to the Young Mayor, Access Inclusion and Participation
Jacob Sakil, Youth Support Worker, Young Mayor's Team
Susan Rowe, Lewisham Education Group and Lewisham Black Parent Forum
Jentai Gen-One, Lewisham Young Mayor
Micah Spence, Young Advisor
Connor Moore, Young Advisor
Kehinde Onasanya, Young Advisor
Yasmina Bez, Young Advisor
Morgan Seward, Young Advisor
Shianti Elliott, Young Advisor
Emmerson Sutton, Young Advisor
Marvin Gordon, Young Advisor
Anissa Bez, Young Advisor
Gideon Ofofi- Owusu, Young Advisor

Katy Brown and Jacob Sakil introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

- 4.1. Young people and staff were keen that the engagement of young people be viewed through the lens of citizenship, with young people as cocreators of services.
- 4.2. The breadth of the work undertaken by the Young Mayor and Advisors was a strength, but the council should think about how it could amplify that work and involve young people further.
- 4.3. There were other youth organisations in the borough with which the council could engage.
- 4.4. Young people developing agency was integral to them being part of civil society and the community and involved in work of the council. The extent of the council's engagement with young people was unique.

Young Advisors then shared their views with the Committee:

- 4.5. Micah Spence explained that a new approach was to engage more young people as Young Advisors by updating and making better use of social media. His view was that, aside from Young Mayor elections, the council's social media did not feature young people enough; the council could help by using its social media channels to promote the work of the Young Mayor and Advisors. Connor Moore added that social media structures favoured certain types of content – YouTube's algorithm promoted videos with human faces in the thumbnail, for example – and the council should consider how to maximise the reach of its content.
- 4.6. Kehinde Onasanya noted that a quarter of Lewisham residents were aged 0-19 and thus a large proportion attended school. They suggested that schools were therefore a good way to reach a large proportion of residents; they had only become aware of work of Young Advisors when standing for Young Mayor and believed it was important to communicate to young the people the choices and options they had.

- 4.7. Morgan Seward, a Mayor's Award nominee, was a member of Champions of Inclusion, a subgroup of Young Advisors which worked with schools and Kaleidoscope to provide a forum for young people with SEND to share their views and ideas. The council could help by organising more events for young people with SEND, who needed a greater focus year-round, not just during Autism Acceptance Week.
- 4.8. Shanti Elliott highlighted the importance of career pathways in a variable labour market. She had transitioned from being a Young Advisor to a Council apprentice, which they described as invaluable. They submitted that the Council and its partners needed to make such opportunities more widely available as their experience was atypical. She further noted the value of Curriculum for Life.

Bryan Strom joined at 19:33.

- 4.9. Emerson Sutton, who had been a Young Advisor since the age of 9, described their role as an enlightening one. They wanted to enter politics and were interested to learn about how things worked/operated. Surveys they had conducted in schools found many young people were interested in careers in law or politics, but pathways were not set out for/promoted to them. They submitted that it was not just young people's voices, but also their ideas which required amplification. Kehinde later noted there were insufficient opportunities for young people to become involved in politics. The Chair added that political parties needed to engage and involve young people more.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 19:40 due to technical issues. The meeting resumed at 19:41.

- 4.10. Yasmina Bez noted that lots of external places (e.g. shops and cafes) were not accessible, which needed to be addressed. Noting that the report stated young people could speak to councillors and senior officers, they wanted to discuss the accessibility of non-council venues with a senior officer as it appeared to them that the council was not doing enough to improve accessibility in the borough. This was an example of how other directorates could engage with young people about issues of interest and concern.
- 4.11. Marvin Gordon explained that young people in the care system, who could be frequently moved around, needed to be introduced to opportunities to have their voice heard, such as the Young Mayor and Advisor roles. He did not believe that such opportunities were promoted to looked-after children in a targeted manner.
- 4.12. Jentai Gen-One, Lewisham Young Mayor, suggested the council should go to Young People rather than the other way around, e.g. by holding 'Question Time' panels in schools or talking to young people on the streets.
- 4.13. Susan Rowe, Lewisham Education Group and Lewisham Black Parent Forum, congratulated the work of the Young Mayor and Advisors. Noting the

interesting, young and diverse nature of Lewisham, she submitted that the borough needed to become the tech hub of London. The Lewisham Education Group was developing a careers forum and Susan had recently discussed tech career paths with industry executives in America. There was a large number of high-skilled vacancies in the tech industry and companies were engaging young staff in high-paying roles. Tech companies were offering accredited training which could lead to employment. She suggested that the Council review whether appropriate tech pathways were available via further education providers.

RESOLVED

- To provide opportunities for a small number of Young Advisors to attend and participate in each of the Committee's meetings and encourage other Select Committees to do so.
- To refer to the Mayor and Cabinet a recommendation that the feasibility of the suggestions at section 7 of the report be explored and reported back to the Committee.

ACTIONS

- Committee to refer Yasmina's concerns to the Cabinet Member for Business, Jobs and Skills.

Item 5 – School Standards Report

Witnesses

Chris Barnham, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Community and Safety

Pinaki Ghoshal, Executive Director for Children and Young People

Angela Scattergood, Director of Education Services

Jacob Sakil, Youth Support Worker, Young Mayor's Team

Susan Rowe, Lewisham Education Group and Lewisham Black Parent Forum

5.1. The Chair noted apologies from Nicky Dixon, Chair – Lewisham Parent Engage, and relayed her comments on the report. Nicky said it was pleasing to read that Lewisham schools continued to achieve good educational outcomes for their pupils, with a high percentage receiving 'Good' Ofsted ratings too. She added that whilst there was a national fragmented education system with different school structures and curricula, the strength of Lewisham schools laid in the way the schools collaborated and had created a family of schools, regardless of structure. She noted that there would continue to be a focus on narrowing attainment gaps amongst certain groups of pupils, which was for the good as every pupil matters.

Angela Scattergood introduced the report. The following key points were noted:

5.2. Validated results data had been published by the Department for Education late (February) and there may be an adjustment in April. Due to the late

- publication of the data, the report did not contain analysis of results by learner characteristics, but such analysis would be shared with schools.
- 5.3. 2023 Key Stage 2 results were likely to be delayed by the King's Coronation.
 - 5.4. Lewisham primary schools performed at or above national, but worse than London, averages. The council was working with a small number of schools where pupils seemed particularly impacted by the pandemic.
 - 5.5. At Key Stage 4, Lewisham schools had made positive progress for the first time. Schools had made particular progress at improving attainment for disadvantaged learners, with such learners' attainment now in the top quartile in the country.
 - 5.6. Focus was needed on foundation subjects, particularly phonics in primary schools, as well as curricular innovation. Priorities were set out in the report.
 - 5.7. The Council was working with schools to identify, provided targeted catchup support, to learners who needed additional support.
 - 5.8. One hundred per cent of primary schools and 86 per cent of secondary schools were rated 'Good' or better by Ofsted.

The Committee then put questions to the witnesses. The following key points were noted:

- 5.9. Dips in Primary attainment since 2019 were also present nationally. Covid-19 had particularly impacted disadvantaged learners.
- 5.10. The improved attainment for disadvantaged learners in Key Stage 4 was attributed to better teaching and school standards. Better data had also enabled schools to target support. Secondary schools had done well at continuing learning for disadvantaged pupils during Covid-19. The Executive Director added that the Education Service's relationship of support and challenge with schools, under Angela's leadership, had also been key.
- 5.11. The attainment of Black learners at Key Stage 2 varied from school to school and between sub-cohorts – Angela agreed this was an urgent issue. More analysis of the link between ethnicity and other forms of disadvantage and educational attainment was required. The Education Service was providing support and guidance to schools where specific issues for Black learners had been identified. A holistic approach to improving attainment for Black learners was adopted, which included schools engaging with parents and the community.
- 5.12. The significant attainment gap between pupils in receipt of Free School Meals and those not so persisted.
- 5.13. The council was publicising school improvement and had run a successful campaign encouraging Lewisham families to apply for places in Lewisham secondary schools – there had been a ten per cent increase in applications in 2022, which was sustained despite a smaller Year 6 cohort.
- 5.14. Teacher retention and recruitment required focus in the future.

- 5.15. Some third-sector organisations were focused on the growing attainment gap between boys and girls. Ensuring good attainment in foundation subjects was central to narrowing attainment gaps.

Susan Rowe, Lewisham Education Group and Lewisham Black Parent Forum, addressed the Committee. The following key points were noted:

- 5.16. A serious issue persisted regarding the attainment of young Black men which translated into worse economic/employment outcomes after they left full-time education.
- 5.17. Schools should directly ask the parents of African/Caribbean and mixed heritage pupils what they would like schools to do differently and engage with wider communities.
- 5.18. The tech sector could deliver social mobility and prevent another generation of young people being left behind.
- 5.19. The recently formed National Black Parent Forum was collecting data from across Britain.
- 5.20. Education leaders in Lewisham were reporting that they received insufficient support regarding Tackling Race and Inequality (TRIE) and were not notified of training opportunities early enough.
- 5.21. Teachers were reporting, via the national Black Teachers Association, that they were struggling with the demands placed upon them.

Angela Scattergood noted that:

- 5.22. Termly briefings on TRIE, which was run by headteachers, were held. School improvement partners visited schools three times per year and asked, amongst other things, what schools were doing to tackle race inequality. A group of governors had developed a toolkit to support governing bodies to hold school leaders to account regarding TRIE by putting questions to stakeholders. School improvement plans indicated there were some schools which did not extensively promote their significant efforts regarding TRIE.
- 5.23. Progress in respect of TRIE and the further priority areas included in the report was regularly reported to the Lewisham Learning Board.

Jacob Sakil noted that:

- 5.24. The Young Mayor Team were delivering workshops in schools on race equality, particularly focusing on changing school culture and engaging young people in education. However, a question remained regarding the capacity to deliver change in schools.
- 5.25. Work in schools should be connected with that in the community to avoid gaps between education and social support/opportunities.
- 5.26. The Chair noted that Committee members had heard of the need for more safe hangout spaces for young people.

5.27. The Executive Director agreed there was still much to be done to improve educational outcomes.

5.28. The Cabinet Member added that the positive progress at improving school standards and educational attainment should not lead to complacency. Increased applications to comprehensive schools indicated that community trust in Lewisham schools was increasing and Ofsted was reporting that teaching and learning was 'Good' in almost all schools. However, translating that improvement into better post-education outcomes was still to be achieved.

RESOLVED

- That the report be noted.

Item 6 – Select Committee work programme

The Committee agreed at 21:27 to suspend Standing Order 10 for no more than five minutes.

Members made the following suggestions for the 23/24 work programme:

- 6.1. Children and Young People's emotional wellbeing and mental health (for the first meeting of 23/24).
- 6.2. School attendance and the impact of absence on learners.

The Chair closed the meeting at 21:28.