

Decisions of the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee

2 July 2012

Members Present:-

Councillor Bridget Perry (Chairman)
Councillor Kate Salinger (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Alison Cornelius Councillor Agnes Slocombe
Councillor Brian Gordon Councillor Zakia Zubairi
Councillor Anne Hutton Councillor Sury Khatri
Councillor Ross Houston (In place of Barry Evangeli)

Also in attendance:

Councillor Andrew Harper - Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families
Councillor Sachin Rajput – Cabinet Member for Adults

Apologies for Absence:

Councillor Barry Evangeli

1. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2012 be agreed as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Barry Evangeli who was substituted for by Councillor Sury Khatri.

3. DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' INTERESTS

Member:	Subject:	Interest Declared:
Councillor Ross Houston	Agenda Item 6 (Personalisation in Adult Care – Self Directed Support Position Statement)	Personal and prejudicial interest by virtue of being a Council appointed Member of the Board of Your Choice Barnet.
Councillor Sury Khatri	All Items	Personal but non-prejudicial interest by virtue of being a Trustee at Barnet Carers Centre, a charity which had been commissioned by the Council to provide of a number of services.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None received.

5. MEMBERS' ITEMS

None.

6. CHILDREN'S CENTRES – UPDATE ON PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families presented the Committee with report detailing the outcome of the public consultation on proposed changes to the children's centres funding formula. The Committee noted that the Cabinet Resources Committee would be taking a decision on the re-allocation of funding at their 17 July 2012 meeting.

Members raised a number of concerns regarding the proposed changes to the funding formula including:

- the impact on children's centres which are expected to a decrease in funding (Newstead, Parkfield, The Hyde and Wingfield);
- the effect of reducing hours in some children's centres from 48 to 38 hours per week, in particular the implications for families that would see an increase in the cost of childcare;
- the impact on families in the more deprived areas of the Borough who relied on affordable childcare to remain in employment; and
- the funding implications for children's centres arising from the implementation of the Payment by Results mechanism.

The Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families emphasised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy was seeking to target resources at those most in need and that this principal had been used in the reconfiguration of services, including children's centres. The Committee were informed that:

- the Children's Service were working with children's centres to revise business plans to ensure their continued viability; and
- the Council would take into account the impact of the changes on families and would provide a staggered offer to some parents, depending on their individual needs and circumstances.

The Committee discussed the recent decision of the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families to offer additional childcare places for less advantaged two year olds. Members questioned why the Council had opted to provide only 500 spaces instead of the recommended 800 places. Officers advised the Committee that the provision of additional places had implications for staffing ratios and there was a capital investment requirement. As a consequence, the additional places would be increased on a staggered basis.

Responding to concerns raised by the Committee regarding a possible decrease in the number of childcare places available as a result of the changes to the funding

formula, the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families reported that the Council was meeting its duty to provide sufficient childcare places in the borough through a mixture of providers. It was noted that the Council had to produce a Childcare Sufficiency Plan every three years which detailed the full range of childcare provision across the borough. If there was inadequate provision, the Council had a duty to address this.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families be requested to provide the 17 July 2012 Cabinet Resources Committee report on Consultation on Proposed Changes to the Funding Formula for Children's Centres to Committee Members, with a follow up report added to the Committee work programme if the Chairman considers necessary.**
- (2) Officers be requested to present a report to a future meeting of the Committee on the children's centres payment by results mechanism.**

7. CHOICE AND ACHIEVEMENT - DRAFT SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION STRATEGY

The Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families presented to the Committee a report on the "Choice and Achievement" draft Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Inclusion Strategy. The Committee were invited to comment on the Strategy in advance of it being finalised.

In response to a question relating to statements of special educational need (or 'statements'), the Committee were informed that Single Assessment Plans (combining assessments by education, health and social care services) would not replace statutory assessments (statements) until 2014. Officers highlighted the importance of undertaking assessments at the right time to enable agencies to intervene early and provide appropriate support.

In response to a question regarding the impact changes to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services and Educational Psychologists, Officers reported that service reductions in these areas had been necessary and were in accordance with service reductions seen across the Council. It was noted that these services would still be available via health and schools.

The Committee noted that there had been an increase in the number of children with complex needs over recent years, with approximately 3% of Barnet's pupil population having social care or special educational needs.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the final "Choice and Achievement" Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Strategy be reported to a future meeting of the Committee for consideration.**
- (2) Officers be requested to provide details of the number of children with special educational needs attending services outside of the borough.**

Having declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item, Councillor Ross Houston left the meeting room.

8. PERSONALISATION IN ADULT SOCIAL CARE - SELF DIRECTED SUPPORT POSITION STATEMENT

The Cabinet Member for Adults presented a report which provided a position statement on Self Directed Support (SDS) in Adult Social Care Services.

The Committee noted that performance had steadily improved since the introduction of SDS in April 2010. By April 2011, 30% of service users were utilising SDS, increasing to 66% in March 2012.

Responding to a question regarding outreach services, Officers reported that information and advice was available to potential service users and their families/carers via the Council's Social Care Direct service and other external organisations, such as Barnet Carers.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) that the comments of the Committee in relation to Self Directed Support as set out above be noted.**

Councillor Houston re-entered the meeting room at the conclusion of the item above

9. QUALITY IN RESIDENTIAL CARE HOMES FOR OLDER ADULTS

The Cabinet Member for Adults presented a report on Quality Assurance in Care Homes.

The Committee noted that there were approximately 100 care homes operating in Barnet, serving both adults and children. The Council funded a small number of residential care home places for eligible for adults.

With regard to care home standards, the Committee were advised that Adult Social Care Services worked closely with the Care Quality Commission on care home standards and there proportionate responses when issues were identified. Council funded residents are supported through an annual social care review process. Members were informed that there would be an increased number of scheduled visits and safeguarding visits to residential care homes during 2012/13. It was noted that Barnet LINK had powers to undertake care home inspections. Officers reported that having multiple inspection and review processes enabled a balanced scorecard/risk matrix approach to be utilised for assessing care homes standards.

The Committee welcomed Sue Green, Director of Operations at Freemantle, a company that were sub-contracted by Catalyst to provide residential care for Barnet residents. Freemantle currently accommodated 234 Barnet residents across four care homes. The current age profile of Freemantle residents was: 25% were under 80; 50% 80-90; and 25% over 90. Members were informed that 65% of residents had a

cognitive impairment and a range of measures were in place to manage these conditions.

The Committee were advised that a recent survey of relatives identified that 89% were satisfied with the care provided by Freemantle. It was noted that Freemantle were developing their quality audit criteria around the MyHomeLife vision set out at Appendix 2 to the report.

The Committee were advised that the two key areas to providing high quality residential care were skilled staff and collaborative working with health services.

In response to a question regarding the qualifications of care home staff, the Committee were informed that care homes placed more emphasis on observed practice than formal qualifications. It was noted that all staff received training alzheimers and dementia care.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) a report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee on Barnet LINK, particularly the number of visits undertaken and their findings.**
- (2) Members interested in undertaking a visit to Freemantle residential care home directly liaise with Adult Social Care and Health.**

10. CABINET FORWARD PLAN

The Committee received the most Cabinet Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted.**

11. SAFEGUARDING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the work programme and requested that the following items be added to the Committee's work programme for the 2012/13 municipal year:

- (i) "Choice and Achievement" Special Educational Needs and Inclusion Strategy
- (ii) Update on Barnet LINK to include the number of inspections/visits undertaken and findings
- (iii) Options paper on the future management and reporting arrangements for Member Visits to Barnet's Children's Homes and Young People's Hostels.

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) the items listed above be added to the Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2012/13.**
- (2) The Safeguarding Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved.**

12. MOTION TO EXCLUDE THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED that under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involved the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 12A of the Act (as amended):

	Exemption category
Members' Visits to Barnet's Children's Homes	3
Statutory Officer visits	3

13. MEMBERS' VISITS TO BARNET'S CHILDREN'S HOMES AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S HOSTELS

RESOLVED -

- (1) That the exempt information be noted.**
- (2) That the Scrutiny Office circulate the Member Rota for visits to Barnet's Children's Homes and Young People's Hostels following the meeting.**
- (3) That the Scrutiny Office and Children's Service develop an options paper on the management and reporting arrangements for future Member Visits to Barnet's Children's Homes and Young People's Hostels for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee.**

14. STATUTORY REGULATION 33 - OFFICER VISITS TO BARNET'S CHILDREN'S HOMES

RESOLVED that:-

- (1) The exempt information be noted.**

The meeting finished at 10.00 pm