

Decisions of the Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee

20 March 2023

Members Present:-

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb (Chair)

Councillor Tony Vourou (Vice-Chair)

Councillor David Longstaff

Councillor Giulia Monasterio

Councillor Zahra Beg

Councillor Liron Woodcock-
Velleman

Councillor Joshua Conway

Councillor Matthew Perlberg

Councillor Mark Shooter

Councillor Lucy Wakeley

Also in attendance

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Emma Whysall

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor Cllr Emma Whysall who was substituted for by Councillor Richard Barnes.

3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

The Chair declared an interest in relation to item 11 by virtue of being a Director of the Barnet, Education and Learning Service. (BELS)

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

None.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

7. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS

Neil Marlow, the Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning, presented the achievement data from the 2021-2022 academic year for Barnet schools.

Recent Ofsted inspections revealed that one school which had previously required improvement, was given a good rating.

Another school was given an inadequate rating due to safeguarding concerns in relation to some processes and record keeping. Measures have already been put into place such as a Local Authority statement of action, a new Designated Safeguarding Lead, a new Safeguarding Governor as well as the implementation of a new digital system for record keeping.

It was noted that a meeting held with parents of the affected school proved to be very positive and parents were confident that their children were safe. The main concern from parents related to potential forced academisation.

In terms of attainment and progress, positive results were noted in Key Stages (KS) 2,4 and 5. Action plans are in place to improve Early Years and Phonics, and aspects of Key Stage 1 to improve our rankings compared to other Local Authorities. Attainment in Reading, Writing and Mathematics combined by KS2 pupils ranked Barnet 8th best LA in the country (10th for disadvantaged pupils). In terms of Attainment 8 in Secondary, Barnet ranked 3rd in the country (9th for disadvantaged pupils) Progress in primary and secondary schools was also very strong.

Areas of priorities were being reviewed by the School Standards Partnership Board as detailed in the report.

It was noted that disadvantaged students were doing much better in comparison to national and that the gaps between disadvantaged pupils in Barnet and non-disadvantaged nationally were smaller than national gaps at each Key Stage.

In response to Members, the academy school which has recently been judged as requiring improvement was in relation to inconsistency of areas within its Curriculum.

Further work was needed with independent schools in Barnet many of which required improvement or were inadequate. Although Independent schools did not receive the same monitoring and support, the Council would be involved where there were safeguarding concerns.

Members were pleased to see that mental health was listed as one of the priorities as raised by young people and requested that Officers provide updates on how the mental health priority develops to the Youth Assembly. Neil Marlow said that regular updates were being reported to relevant partnership boards but offered officer attendance at Youth Assembly to provide an update if required.

Members raised the issue of Black children making less progress. It was noted that 'Black' comprised of a wide ethnic code including African, Black Caribbean and mixed

White and Black Caribbean groups who were underperforming in Barnet compared to White British pupils. Conferences of best practice have taken place to understand reasons why that particular group of pupils were disengaging in schools. The School Improvement team also analysed data to highlight both progress and challenges for particular groups of pupils.

However, wider involvement was needed to understand why particular children were being excluded from school and society in general.

It was noted that a newly accredited Phonics scheme introduced by the Government and implemented in most schools in Barnet may have caused a dip in Phonics results. However, positive results were expected following a year of implementation.

RESOLVED that the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee note the validated results for school performance in Barnet for the academic year 2021/22 as set out in Appendix A: Summary of Educational Standards in Barnet, 2021/22

8. CARERS AND YOUNG CARERS STRATEGY 2023-2028 - TO FOLLOW

Tina McElligott, Director of Children's Social Care, presented an update to the previous strategy coproduced with 300 carers and young carers. One of the priorities was to improve identification of carers in the borough.

Members queried about whether there was a Borough wide process to identify young carers. The Officer said that process of identification is through usual multi-agency referral pathways into Early Help Services.

The Chair highlighted that some young people did not want to be identified as young carers as they might have worries about what would happen if professionals found out about their caring responsibilities. Through the strategy, it is our aim to ensure these young people understand the support available and access it.

RESOLVED that the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee:

1. Approve the Carers and Young Carers Strategy 2023-2028.

2. Note that a review of the Carers and Young Carers Strategy 2023-2028 is scheduled for 2025.

9. DRAFT BARNET CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PLAN 2023-2027

Ben Thomas, Assistant Director, Education, Strategy and Partnerships presented the plan produced in conjunction with partners involved with children and young people across Barnet as well as with young people.

The family friendly vision involved children and young people living their lives successfully with appropriate support, ensuring that opportunities were available to all in tackling inequalities.

In response to Members, the young people statement was a work in progress. However, the foreword would be circulated with the statement to Committee Members before going out to consultation.

RESOLVED that the Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee:

- 1. That the Committee consider and comment on the draft Children and Young People Plan 2023-27 including the vision and key outcomes**
- 2. That the Committee give approval for public consultation of the draft Children and Young People Plan 2023-27.**
- 3. That following public consultation delegated authority is given to the Executive Director, Children's and Family Services, in consultation with the Committee Chair, to give final approval to publish the Children and Young People Plan 2023-27.**

10. BARNET SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

Ben Thomas presented the report which included contributions from partners and which set out progress against the priorities. Safeguarding themes had been taken into account with three experts from Health, Social Care and the Police who scrutinised key areas. Positive feedback was received which included robust arrangements and a continuous culture of openness and willingness to learn.

Recommendations for improvement around recruitment and retention issues have been incorporated into the business plan in the coming year.

RESOLVED that the Committee notes and considers the reports and provide any comments on the Annual Report.

11. VARIATION OF THE BARNET EDUCATION AND LEARNING SERVICE ARTICLES - TO FOLLOW

Chris Munday, Neil Marlow and Ben Thomas declared interests by virtue of being Directors of the Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS).

It was noted that a recent audit identified a slight amendment required in governance to make the Articles fit for purpose.

Members commended the Board for its significant contributions.

RESOLVED THAT:

- 1. That Committee approve the amendments to the Articles of Association for BELS to increase the number of directors from a maximum of seven to a maximum of ten.**
- 2. That Committee delegate authority to the Deputy Chief Executive to finalise the drafting of the Articles of Association and to issue a written resolution to BELS to amend the Articles of Association.**

12. ANNUAL REPORT ON SCHOOL FUNDING IN BARNET 2023-24

Chris Munday, Executive Director of Children's and Family Services, presented the report relating to school funding arrangements including maintained nurseries. Recent challenges received a response from Government to fund and sustain nurseries in the Borough as well as an increase in allowance for childcare.

Chris Munday thanked Members for all the work Members had contributed to the positive outcome.

In response to Members, Neil Marlow explained there was no way of redistributing funding and that schools received their funding based on the national funding formula. It was noted that the projected reserves in school budgets at the end of Quarter 3 had reduced significantly. Therefore, many schools were expected to be in deficit, going forward, due to financial difficulties.

It was noted that schools were being supported through monthly finance briefings on how to manage their budget and ways to deal with increasing challenges.

RESOLVED that the Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee:

- 1. Note the approved formula funding to be used in the Authority Proforma Tool (which specifies the authority's funding formula for schools) as set out and agreed at the Schools Forum on 12 January 2023**
- 2. Note the approved final Authority Proforma Tool for submission to the Department for Education (DfE).**
- 3. Note the recommendation of the proposed use of Direct Schools Grant (DSG) reserves of £0.75m for funding for new arrivals and £1.0m for therapies for children with Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP).**
- 4. Note that the Early Years funding allocation is estimated using pupil data taken from the Early Years and Schools census in January 2022. The final allocation will be updated in July 2023 based on the January 2023 census numbers and as set out and agreed at Schools Forum on 12 January 2023**
 - The hourly rate received by Barnet for 3- and 4-year-olds has increased from £6.24 to £6.41.
 - The proposal to increase the passthrough basic hourly rate for 3 and 4 year olds by £0.42 to from £5.45 to £5.87.
 - The proposal that the deprivation rate based on IDACI is increased by £0.01 from £0.29 to £0.30 per hour, therefore passing on the increase from the government directly to providers.
 - The DfE funding rate for 2-year-olds has been increased by £0.63 and the proposal to pass this increase on to providers, thus increasing the rate from £6.29 an hour in 2022-23 to £6.92 an hour in 2023-24.
 - From April 2023, funding for Maintained Nursery Schools is included within the Early Years Block. Each part-time equivalent is funded at £3.80 per hour and the proposal to pass this funding onto our Maintained Nursery Schools in full.
- 5. Note that the Provisional High Needs funding allocation as set out and agreed at Schools Forum in January has been calculated as follows:**
 - £65.334m - Actual High Needs National Funding Formula allocation

- £4.509m - based on a £5,200.81 per pupil Area Cost Adjustment (ACA) weighted base rate *867 (pupils in special schools/special academies based on the October 2022 census)
- £0.756m - Import/export adjustment for net 75 imported pupils
- £0.306m – Additional High Needs Funding for Special Free School
- £0.918m – hospital education and teachers’ pay and pension

13. JOINT HOUSING PROTOCOL

Tina McElligott presented the report developed with Housing which set out the Council's responsibility for assessing the needs of 16-17 year olds who presented as homeless or at risk of homelessness.

The report included options of support for resettlement of young people from custody. The protocol enabled effective partnership working between Housing and Children Services and once approved, information booklets on how to access help and support would be coproduced with children and young people to be disseminated to public spaces, schools and colleges.

Chris Munday said that the Care Leaver Protocol was updated with Barnet Homes to reflect benefits and streamlining of processes to ensure that no young person in Care would present as homeless on their 18th birthday. The protocol also reflects the current Corporate Parenting Strategy Pledge to include Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking children.

In response to Members, Chris Munday said that although additional affordable homes have not been acquired, children and young people were exempt from Council Tax for the whole period between the ages of 18 to 25. In addition, Housing and Growth have agreed to consult on the change of banding to the most vulnerable Care Leavers to get them higher on the priority list.

A detailed programme of accommodation was in place to ensure that no child was placed in unsuitable accommodation.

RESOLVED That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee is asked to note and provide comments on the Barnet Housing Protocol for Care leavers and the Barnet Joint Housing and Children’s Social Care Protocol for Homeless 16 & 17 Year Old’s as summarised in this report and Appendix 1 & 2.

14. FAMILY SERVICES QUARTERLY UPDATE

Chris Munday introduced the report drawing Members attention to the challenges around staffing. However, progress has been made with a new programme recruiting a whole range of social workers whilst providing a much needed positive experience. Although the lack of staffing has impacted on indicators such as timeliness and assessments, a range of tools were being put into place to address those issues.

Tina McElligott highlighted that the Early Help Strategy had been updated following consultation with young people, Members, parents and partners. The addition of a link to the local offer for SEND would finalise the strategy.

Chris Munday added that the vision for children services was that children grow up in loving, safe and stable families and where that was not possible, care provides the same foundations so that all children could reach their potential.

The six pillars of reform were shared with the Committee. In addition to best practice and improving the ways of working, pilots such as family group decision making as well as regional care collaborative schemes were to be developed. Ongoing consultation in relation to staffing would help further understand changes that required implementation.

Tina McElligott said parent champion networks were being developed through training to allow families to become facilitators thus providing an extended support system for families in crisis.

That the Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee:

- 1. Note and provide comments on the ChAT performance report summarised in this report and Apdx 1.**
- 2. Note and provide comments on the Ofsted Annual Self Evaluation in Apdx 2 and Annual Engagement Meeting letter in Apdx 3.**
- 3. Note and provide comments on the Conditions for Success programme, detailed in the report.**
- 4. Note and provide comments on the Conditions for Success programme, detailed in the report.**
- 5. Note and provide comments on the Staying Put Policy in Apdx 4.**
- 6. Note and provide comments on the Government's response to the Independent Review of Children's Social Care**
- 7. Approves the Children and Families Early Help Strategy in Apdx 5.**

15. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the work programme.

16. ANY OTHER ITEM(S) THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT (IF ANY)

None.

The meeting finished at Time Not Specified