

# Decisions of the Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee

20 October 2022

Members Present:-

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb (Chair)

Councillor Tony Vourou (Vice-Chair)

Councillor David Longstaff

Councillor Liron Velleman

Councillor Linda Lusingu

Councillor Matthew Perlberg

Councillor Mark Shooter

Councillor Lucy Wakeley

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Giulia Monasterio

Councillor Zahra Beg

Councillor Joshua Conway

## 1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

An amendment was noted on page 3 of the previous minutes. The sentence should read, 'Mr Munday said that there was over 200 UASC and over 800 residents in hotels with a large influx of people over the years.'

**RESOLVED that the minutes of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee held on 07 June 2022 be approved as a correct record.**

## 2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor Giulia Monasterio who was substituted for by Councillor Richard Barnes.

Apologies were received from Councillor Zahra Beg who was substituted for by Councillor Anne Clarke.

Councillor Joshua Conway was absent.

## 3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER INTERESTS

None.

## 4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

## 5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

None.

**6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)**

None.

**7. BARNET YOUTH PARLIAMENT AND YOUTH AMBASSADOR SCHEME 2022**

The Executive Director of Children and Family Services, Chris Munday, recommended that the young people be invited to a future meeting to set out their key priorities.

**8. BARNET YOUNG PEOPLE'S SURVEY 2021/22**

Chris Munday introduced the item which set out the results from the latest Young Persons Survey which would aid Children and Family Services in understanding what young people thought about Barnet and the key issues faced to enable better planning.

Daniel Morris and Alex Hymer from Opinion Research Services presented the findings to the Committee.

It was noted that the face to face survey was conducted on 500 young people aged between 11 and 18.

Key results showed that a high proportion of young people were happy with the local area as a place to live as well as the services it had to offer.

In relation to personal safety, the top concern amongst young people was knife crime. Those with a disability expressed top concerns in crime, road congestion, the lack of jobs and the lack of good health services.

It was noted that since 2019, priorities of young people had not changed significantly.

Members questioned whether results from the survey would be reported to other services. Chris Munday said that the results were reported to relevant services and Boards. Detailed analysis of the findings would be carried out, targeting relevant demographics in the development of the Children & Young People's Plan.

It was noted that whilst statistical differences were highlighted to the Committee, a detailed analysis by constituency, age or gender could be made available by the organisation.

The Chair noted that the survey was beneficial in helping identify any gaps in provision to ensure everyone was able to access services on offer.

**RESOLVED that the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee:**

- 1. Note and comment on the Young People's Perception Survey results as detailed in Appendix 1.**
- 2. Note that the information is utilised to support service and partnership planning.**

## **9. POST-16 EDUCATION AND SKILLS STRATEGY UPDATE**

The Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning, Neil Marlow, presented the report which included an update since the strategy was last approved by Committee in June 2021.

The report highlighted appropriate pathways for children and young people in post 16 education and training to ensure future success.

Members queried whether schools were buying into the careers advice traded service for children with additional needs and whether the challenges within schools budgets meant that schools were not able to buy in. Neil Marlow said that he would report back to Members directly with details of buy-back. It was noted that although schools were struggling financially, where a particular service offered value for money, schools were willing to 'buy in' to help young people make the right choices for of their careers.

In response to Members' question on whether the Council monitored the school's career advice service, Neil Marlow said that monitoring was carried out by Ofsted.

Chris Munday added that figures in relation to those not in education, employment or training (NEET) in Barnet were very positive in comparison to national data which suggested good support systems in place.

Members asked about school success stories and whether that was shared in relation to vocational routes. It was noted that a culture change was needed to show that vocational routes were just as beneficial as other routes i.e. GCSE or A Level and young people needed to choose the right route for them which would lead to future success.

The first vocational newsletter has been distributed to schools sharing success stories. It was noted that close relationships with schools enabled essential communications to be cascaded via the Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) to parents.

In relation to one of the priorities on reducing the number of young people dropping out during the transition year, it was noted that information on drop out numbers were made available by schools and through destination figures.

**RESOLVED that the Committee note the report.**

## **10. PLANNING FOR NEW SCHOOL PLACES: UPDATE AND SCHOOL PLACES PLAN 2023-2027**

Neil Marlow introduced the School Places Plan which had been approved up to 2023. The recommendation was to approve a further extension of the plan till 2027 to allow the Council to fulfil its statutory duties.

One of the challenges faced was trying to predict place planning due to uncertainties surrounding the number of children.

Over the last decade, the Council had undergone a programme of expanding schools and increasing the published admissions number (PAN) to ensure sufficient places. However this demand for additional school places was now over (apart from in a small number of areas in Barnet) and most areas were seeing a drop in numbers.

In order to support schools who wanted to reduce places, temporary measures were in place to cap numbers or longer term measures to change the PAN of schools where required.

Information on the provision of additional specialist places for pupils with SEND would be reported to the November e Committee meeting.

It was noted that the overall quality of school provision is affected by the high number of independent schools that we have in Barnet which we do not have the same monitoring responsibilities for. 22% of the schools in Barnet were independent schools, higher in comparison to other local authorities. BELS would continue to provide input and support to improve the provision in schools deemed to be inadequate for safeguarding.

It was noted that a report on sufficiency for early years provisions, setting out the Council's overall position and standards to improve quality would be reported at the next meeting. In relation to provision for two year olds, it was noted that campaigns and surveys were being carried out.

**RESOLVED that the Children, Education, Safeguarding Committee:**

1. **Note the projected future requirements for school places up to 2026/27.**
2. **Note the progress in delivering sufficient primary, secondary and special school places to date.**

## **11. LOCAL AUTHORITY SCHOOL GOVERNOR NOMINATIONS - UPDATE**

The current process for nominations of Local Authority School Governors was working well. Members of the Committee were encouraged to contact Neil Marlow to put forth their interests in being a Governor.

**RESOLVED that the Committee note the information in Appendix A of this report on the nominations of local authority governors to Barnet Schools since September 2021.**

## **12. FEES AND CHARGES 2023/24**

The report on fees and charges was submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee which had taken place prior to the meeting.

It was noted that the new fees for attendance at court related to contact services.

**RESOLVED that the Committee approve the proposed fees and charges for 2023/24 set out in Appendix A that will be included in the budget proposals submitted to Policy and Resources Committee for consideration and recommendation to Full Council in January 2023.**

### **13. FAMILY SERVICES QUARTERLY UPDATE**

Chris Munday highlighted the report including the benchmarking information, the national review into the murders of two children, corporate parenting as well as the summer celebrations for care leavers.

There has been a reduction in Initial Child Protection Conferences (ICPCs) being held within 15 days from the Strategy Discussion. This can be due to a change in family circumstances, particularly families moving across boundaries. The timeliness of single assessments has improved with robust management oversight. Some assessments have been delayed due to agency social workers leaving at short notice and the need to reallocate assessments. The London pledge has created a pan-London agreement in which capped pay rates for agency social work staff and agreed notice periods have been put into place to reduce the movement of agency staff across London.

Barnet remains part of the North London Adoption Agency. The adoption numbers in Barnet remained low but there are an increasing number of early permanence placements this year. Barnet is currently challenging the financial contribution to the partnership as it is higher than other LA's This is part of ongoing negotiations. More information was needed around adoption support provided by ALN as Barnet had a number of families living in the borough with adopted children.

An added challenge was the recruitment of adopters by ALN. The service continues to work with ALN to ensure access to the pool of adopters for Barnet children.

It was noted that the local authority's internal placement provision is being expanded with a two-bedroomed children's home that will be used as a solo placement when needed and independent accommodations to guarantee availability for our care experienced young adults.

In relation to the national review of child protection, Barnet has sought to provide assurance on the quality of local practice by undertaking a review of the quality of s47 Child Protection Enquiries and the management of referrals from family members.

The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) had a higher than usual volume of contacts over the past year. There has been an increase in contacts which require signposting to other services. All contacts to the MASH are RAG rated for priority within 24 hours of being received and all contacts RAG rated as Red are passed to Children's Social Care for a statutory social work assessment immediately.

It was noted that some Members were not able to access blue papers and that they should be made available for consideration.

#### **RESOLVED that the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee:**

- 1. Note and provide comments on the ChAT performance report summarised in this report and Appendix 1 and the LIA Benchmarking Report for Quarter 4 in Appendix 2.**
- 2. Note and provide comments on the National review into the murders of Arthur Labinjo-Hughes and Star Hobson (appendix 3)**

3. **Note and provide comments on the Draft Corporate Parenting Annual Report (appendix 4)**
4. **Note and provide comments on the summer celebration for Barnet children in care and the BACE (Barnet Active, Creative, Engaged) summer activities**
5. **Note and provide comments on our progress against our Recruitment & Workforce Development Strategy**
6. **Note and provide comments on the development of our new Early Help Strategy**

**14. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME**

**RESOLVED** that the Committee note the work programme.

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

None.

The meeting finished at Time Not Specified