

Decisions of the Children, Education, Libraries & Safeguarding Committee

7 March 2018

Members Present:-

Councillor Reuben Thompstone (Chairman)

Councillor Bridget Perry (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb

Councillor Alison Cornelius

Councillor Val Duschinsky

Councillor Helena Hart

Councillor Nagus Narenthira

Councillor Ammar Naqvi (Substitute)

Councillor Anne Hutton

Also in attendance

Denis Carey (Co-Opted Member)

Kevin McSharry (Co-Opted Member)

Gladys Vendy (Co-Opted Member)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Kath McGuirk

Marilyn Nathan (Co-Opted Member)

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Reuben Thompstone welcomed all attendees to the meeting.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting of the Committee held on 16th January 2018 be agreed as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies for absence were received from:

- Councillor Kath McGuirk who was substituted by Councillor Ammar Naqvi

3. DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS

The following declarations were made at the meeting:

Councillor	Agenda Item(s)	Declaration
Anne Hutton	9	Declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of being a trustee for the Barnet Borough Arts Council

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

The Committee received two verbal comments from Mr Gerrard Roots and Councillor John Hart respectively. The Chairman thanked Mr Roots and Councillor Hart for their statements.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

Councillor Coakley Webb presented the Member's item in her name. The Committee noted the details of the Member's item as set out in the report.

The Chairman welcomed the opportunity to review the impact of the new system and the changes once a calendar year when sufficient time has elapsed. In relation to the wording of the Member's item, the Committee agreed to amend the wording to include North Finchley:

*Hendon, Golders Green and ~~Hendon~~ **North Finchley** libraries*

Councillor Coakley Webb moved a motion which was seconded and agreed by the Committee to read as follows:

- *That the Committee receives the Annual Review Report on the changes and impact of the new library system. (Action: Forward Work Programme)*
- *That the Committee receives an update briefing from Officers outside of the meeting after the Local Elections on the current status and the impact of the changes so far following the reconfiguration.*

It was therefore **RESOLVED:**

1. **That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee receive the Annual Review Report on the changes and impact of the new library system.**
2. **That the Committee receive an update briefing from Officers outside of the meeting after the Local Elections on the current status and the impact of the changes so far following the reconfiguration.**

7. UPDATE REPORT ON PROGRESS OF BARNET CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN

The Chairman introduced the progress update report, noting the efforts that have been made and the journey ahead which still requires work to be done.

The Strategic Director for Children and Young People, Chris Munday presented the fourth progress update report to the Committee. Mr Munday briefed the Committee about the second Ofsted Monitoring Visit and the feedback letter attached to the report.

He spoke about the encouraging findings as set out in the Monitoring Visit Letter. The Committee also heard about the improvements made and the importance of maintaining and building on the work done so far.

Speaking on the theme Governance, Leadership and Partnership Mr Munday highlighted the training sessions delivered for Members and the sessions scheduled for the next months which includes a review of governance.

In relation to the theme Improving Assessments for Children, Mr Munday noted that much work has been delivered in this area to ensure that plans are robust, particularly around the improvement in positive engagement with partner agencies.

It was noted that prior to this meeting, 7th March 2018, a Member session was delivered with guest speaker Councillor Dick Madden, Cabinet Member of Children and Families at Essex County Council, about using governance to improve the quality of Children's Services. The Committee were informed that work towards embedding improvements will continue with Councillor Madden in the future.

Mr Munday spoke about the Right interventions, Right time theme which focused on developing an effective MASH. The Committee heard about the training delivered to partners on how the MASH functions and how to make effective referrals.

As recorded within the Monitoring Visit Letter, developments within this area have been made on the systems and processes to manage workflow and recording are better aligned. The Committee heard about the cultural changes needed to drive improvement, such as enabling staff to understand the importance and meaning of purposeful social work assessments and interventions with families.

The Committee welcomed the progress update report and queried the reasons for the variable standards of case recording found by inspectors.

Tina McElligott, Operational Director Early Help, Children in Need of Help and Protection explained that there was still work to be done for further improvement in this area. She briefed the Committee about the reasons for the variable standard which related to the discussions held outside normal working hours and engagement with other stakeholders such as health workers.

In response to a query on improving engagement in Strategy discussions, Mr Munday noted that work has been undertaken to review how best to continue to improve engagement with health professionals and make Strategy discussions work better as a partnership.

Responding to a comment on improving the quality of assessments, Ms McElligott spoke about the changes made in management framework and discussions held with staff about capability and performance. The Committee also heard about the measures being taken to imbed an improved systematic approach towards helping children, young people and families.

Ms McElligott responded to a comment about the figures for agency staff within the improvement plan data dashboard and explained that for Posts over Establishment there will be certain posts that can be filled by agency staff only. It was also noted that measures have been put into place to ensure assessments are carried out effectively, without unnecessary delays and that assessments do not delay safeguarding of children and young people.

Following a query from the Committee on missing children and young people, it was noted that work continues to be carried out closely with the Police including the sharing of information on a high frequent basis.

The Committee also noted that the focus of the next monitoring visit which will take place in April will be on vulnerable adolescents (child sexual and criminal exploitation and missing children).

The Committee commended the work delivered by the social work practice teams. The Chairman thanked the Committee for the discussion and noted the challenging and rewarding work done towards improving outcomes for children and young people.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Committee noted the progress of the Barnet Children's Services Improvement Action Plan as set out in paragraphs 1.4 to 1.50.**
- 2. That the Committee noted details of Ofsted's monitoring visit set out in paragraphs 1.11 to 1.19 and the monitoring visit feedback letter received from Ofsted attached in Appendix 1.**
- 3. That the Committee noted and scrutinised the performance information provided in paragraphs 1.51 to 1.61 and Barnet Children's Services Improvement Plan Data Dashboard attached in Appendix 2.**

8. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS IN BARNET 2016/17

The Chairman introduced the report, which sets out validated results for 2016/17 assessments and national examinations, noting the positive results and the areas for further improvement. He invited Ian Harrison, Education and Skills Director, Barnet with Cambridge Education to join the meeting.

Mr Harrison presented the item highlighting the achievements, key performance figures achieved and areas of focus for improvement.

In response to a query on areas for improvement, Mr Harrison noted that Achievement of Disadvantaged Pupils and Looked after Children remain priority areas for improvement.

Following a comment from the Committee about Primary Attendance, Mr Harrison explained that despite improvements, this will be an area for review.

In relation to this issue, he informed the Committee that unauthorised leave is still the main problem. The review will involve working closely with colleagues, schools and Head Teachers to encourage greater attendance which impacts good achievement.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED:**

That the Committee noted the validated results for school performance in Barnet for the academic year 2016/17 as set out in Appendix A: Summary of Educational Standards in Barnet, 2016/17.

9. ARTS AND CULTURE STRATEGY FOR BARNET

The Chairman welcomed Ben Thomas, Strategic Lead for Children and Young People to join the meeting.

Mr Thomas presented the report and informed the Committee about the Arts and Culture Strategy which is set out in draft format at Appendix 1. It was noted that the Strategy will be a joint effort and once finalised will be published.

In response to a query from the Committee about representation from other organisations, Mr Munday noted that a plan will be developed that will operate under the Strategy. The plan will be supported and developed by the Arts and Culture Board.

Following suggestions from the Committee about representation from other bodies such as Barnet Borough Arts Council and CommUnity Barnet – Mr Thomas welcomed the suggestions to seek engagement from other organisations which would contribute to discussions and bring different perspectives.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED**:

- 1. That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee noted the partnership activity to date to develop a draft Arts and Culture strategy.**
- 2. That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee agreed the Arts and Culture strategy set out in Appendix 1.**
- 3. That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee delegated authority to the Strategic Director for Children and Young People to finalise the strategy document for publication, including agreeing suitable images.**
- 4. That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee noted the progress on the establishment of a resource to kick start the use of incidental and ‘meanwhile use’ space in the borough.**

10. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the standing item on the agenda which lists the items for consideration by the Committee in 2018. It was noted that the Forward Work Programme was updated with a request for a report at a future meeting which will be included on the Forward Work Programme.

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the Forward Work Programme for 2018.

11. ANY ITEM(S) THAT THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee, Councillor Bridget Perry thanked the Chairman for his work and efforts and wished him all the best for the future.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Helena Hart, Chairman of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Vice-Chairman, Councillor Bridget Perry for their contributions.

The meeting finished at 9.15 pm