

Decisions of the Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee

13 March 2019

Members Present:-

Councillor David Longstaff (Chairman)
Councillor Rohit Grover (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor Pauline Coakley Webb Councillor Linda Freedman
Councillor Alison Cornelius Councillor Anne Hutton
Councillor Val Duschinsky Councillor Felix Byers
Councillor Anne Clarke

Also in attendance
Councillor Stephen Sowerby (Substitute)

Apologies for Absence

Councillor Reuben Thompstone Councillor Nagus Narenthira

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Chairman of the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee, Councillor David Longstaff opened the meeting and welcomed all attendees.

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 16th January 2019 be agreed as a correct record.

2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor Nagus Narenthira and Councillor Reuben Thompstone who was substituted by Councillor Stephen Sowerby.

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

None.

4. REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER (IF ANY)

None.

5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS (IF ANY)

None were received.

6. MEMBERS' ITEMS (IF ANY)

None.

7. UPDATE REPORT ON THE PROGRESS OF BARNET CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT ACTION PLAN AND OTHER CES COMMITTEE PRIORITIES

The Chairman introduced the item which was presented by the Executive Director for Children and Young People, Mr Chris Munday.

Mr Munday summarised the report which includes the letter from the recent OFSTED monitoring visit which took place in February 2019, and focussed on Care Leaving Services, and how young people prepare to leave care. Members considered the letter and the report.

Following a comment from the Committee about the Children and Young People's Plan, Officers note that an update be provided within the next Report detailing changes made to the CYPP, if any. **(Action)**

In relation to the revised Homelessness Protocol, Members queried the support provided to 16/17 year olds towards preventing homelessness and homelessness relief.

Officers briefed Members about the role of the Housing Needs Officer and MASH in assessing the level of risk of homelessness and the supported accommodations options.

The Committee highlighted the importance of ensuring that young people in need of accommodation are supported. This was noted and Officers informed Members about the support on offer particularly in respect of education, career paths, managing finances and life skills.

In terms of communication, Members asked about the methods used to raise awareness of the support services available for young people at risk of homelessness. Officers noted that multiple communication methods are used such as online support and that leaflets are dispersed at various locations including schools and colleges.

In response to a query from the Committee about tackling gang activity, it was noted that partnership arrangements continue to be in place to support the delivery of work with young people at risk of exploitation including in relation to gangs.

The Committee heard that the one of the aims of the partnership arrangements with MAC UK, Growing Against Violence and Art Against Knives is to focus on building trusting relationships with young people as the primary mechanism to implementing change and that the training offered to staff has been designed to this effect. Officers also noted that this is a Committee priority and is included within the Corporate Plan Addendum.

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 1.11 to 1.34.**
- 2. That the Committee noted the OFSTED monitoring visit feedback letter.**

3. That the Committee reviewed and approved the updated Joint Protocol for homeless young people aged 16 and 17 attached as Appendix 2.
4. That the Committee noted and scrutinised the performance information provided in Appendix 3.
5. That the Committee reviewed and approved the 2019-20 Delivery Plan of the Children and Young People's Plan attached as Appendix 4.

8. BUSINESS CASE FOR THE REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY IN NORTH LONDON

The Chairman introduced the item and Mr Munday presented the report which asks the Committee to consider and approve the Business Case.

Following a query from the Committee about Adopt London North, it was noted that the proposal is for the London Borough of Barnet to be part of Adopt London North, alongside the London Boroughs of Enfield, Camden, Hackney, Islington and Haringey.

The Committee asked about Barnet's contribution towards Adopt London North and it was noted that the contribution rates have been calculated using the current staffing costs of Adoption services in each borough and set out in Table 1, p.96 of the Agenda.

Members queried the procedure in case a dispute should arise following approval of the Partnership Agreement.

It was noted that the agreement will cover the aims of the Regional Adoption Agency, how it will operate and that this will include merging all the six Adoption Panels (one in each borough) into one Regional Adoption Panel. It was also noted that the agreement will include a dispute resolution mechanism. Officers informed the Committee that the regionalisation of adoption would seek to strengthen the adoption process and the ability to have a broader choice of adopters.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Committee approved the Business Case for Adopt London North (attached to this report as Appendix 1).
2. That the Committee recommended to Council the following decisions:
 - That the functions referred to in section 5.4 are delegated to the London Borough of Islington from the date specified in the partnership agreement to be entered into for the purposes of setting up Adopt London North;
 - That delegated authority is given to the Director of Children's Services to negotiate and sign a partnership agreement to effect the establishment of the Adopt London North Regional Adoption Agency.

9. EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS IN BARNET 2017/18

Upon invitation of the Chairman, Mr Ian Harrison Education and Skills Director, Barnet with Cambridge Education joined the meeting and highlighted the key aspects of the report.

Mr Harrison noted the high achievement of Barnet school pupils and Barnet schools.

Members queried the attainment of disadvantaged pupils, Mr Harrison noted the improvements achieved – that in 2016 the percentage of disadvantaged pupils reaching the expected standard in Reading, Writing and Mathematics was 46% increasing to 55% in 2017 and 62% in 2018.

The achievement of disadvantaged pupils continues to be monitored and is one of the key focus areas. He informed that this includes ongoing detailed discussions with individual schools and to encourage those schools to share lessons with other schools.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED:**

That the Committee noted the validated results for school performance in Barnet for the academic year 2017/18 as set out in Appendix A: Summary of Educational Standards in Barnet, 2017/18.

10. SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES STRATEGY - UPDATE

Mr Munday and Mr Harrison presented the report to the Committee and stressed the importance of ensuring an effective system working with children and families experiencing SEND. It was stressed that the priorities need to reflect the most up to date assessment of progress following the local review.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee approved the draft changes to the Strategic Priorities in the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy, to allow for consultation on the Strategic Priorities.**
- 2. That the Committee agreed the initial proposals to commission additional specialist places for children and young people set out in the report and the plans to complete a needs analysis, leading to the production of an updated Special Provision Plan and proposals for the use of the council's Special Places Fund allocation.**
- 3. That the Committee delegated authority to the Strategic (Executive) Director for Children and Young People, following consultation with the Chairman of the Committee, to:**
 - Consult on the Strategic Priorities and, following consultation, finalise these and update the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Strategy;**
 - Finalise a draft Special Places Plan and proposals for use of the remaining Special Places Fund allocation;**
 - Consult on the draft Special Places Plan and allocation proposals and, following consultation, agree the Special Places Plan and use of the Special Places Fund.**

11. CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

Officers presented the report and noted the key messages from the analysis of current childcare provision in the borough and its take up, as well as future development required to meet future demand.

It was unanimously **RESOLVED**:

That the Committee noted the Barnet Childcare Sufficiency Assessment 2018 attached to this report as Appendix A.

12. CHILDREN, EDUCATION & SAFEGUARDING COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED that the Committee noted the standing item on the agenda which sets out the business reports on the Forward Work Programme.

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

None.

The meeting finished at 8.00 pm