

# **Decisions of the Children, Education & Safeguarding Committee**

7 June 2021

## **Members Present:-**

Councillor David Longstaff (Chairman)  
Councillor Felix Byers (Vice-Chairman)

Councillor  
Pauline Coakley Webb  
Councillor Linda Freedman  
Councillor Rohit Grover  
Councillor Anne Hutton  
Councillor Nagus Narendhira

Councillor Danny Rich  
Councillor Julian Teare  
Councillor Reuben Thompstone  
Councillor Saira Don (In place of  
Councillor Val Duschinsky)

## **1. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting dated May 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

## **2. ABSENCE OF MEMBERS**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Val Duschinsky. Councillor Saira Don was substituting.

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

Councillor Anne Hutton declared a non-pecuniary interest) by virtue of being a Trustee of the Barnet Carer's Centre which has a contract with council, providing some of its children services.

Councillor Danny Rich declared a non-pecuniary interest) by virtue of being a Trustee of the Barnet Carer's Centre which has a contract with council, providing some of its children services.

Councillor Felix Byers declared a non-pecuniary interest by virtue of being a Trustee of UNITAS Youth Zone.

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

None.

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

None.

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

None.

## **7. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION**

The Executive Director for Children Services introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on Elective Home Education in Barnet and sought approval for the Draft Elective Home Education Policy and for consultation on the draft policy. This item was accompanied by a separate exempt report which was discussed in the private session.

The Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning, Barnet Education and Learning Service (BELS) took the Committee through the Draft Elective Home Education Policy which was prepared in line with new guidance issued by the Department for Education in 2019.

He explained that amongst some of its key areas, the policy aimed to tighten up the reporting requirements by schools if a child leaves to be home educated. It also tightened up the procedures in respect of information sharing between schools, the EHE advisory teacher, BELS and other agencies such as social care, GPs, etc. This purpose, to ensure that as well as having the duties that the council has in respect of Home Education, there is the overriding safeguarding duty. This policy aims to strengthen the link between the two.

He explained that there is limited right of access to children under Home Education guidance. The council do not have the right to go into family homes nor do they have right to make parents come to meetings. This policy sets out the steps and procedures to follow in order to move from checking on Home Education to checking on safeguarding, and there are various triggers in place for this. For example, if the child was known to social care, officers would liaise with social care about visits. There is a full time Elective Home Officer who checks that the home education being provided is suitable, i.e. that they are making progress in literacy and numeracy, that life skills are being taught and to look out for any warning signs. There is no requirement for home educating parent to educate their children in line with the national curriculum.

Councillor Nagus Narendhira, duly seconded moved the following motion.

*'The Committee requests that the Chair of Barnet's Children Education and Safeguarding Committee write to the Secretary of State for Education to request that should parents elect to educate their child at home, then they must register their intent to do so with the Local Education Authority.'*

*'The Committee also requests to ask for a definition on what is considered a 'suitable education' for children who are in receipt of Elective Home Education.'*

*'The Committee is concerned that the current terminology is not specific enough and such children may therefore not be in receipt of an education sufficient to enable them to follow their subsequent chosen career paths.'*

Following the discussion on the proposed motion, the Councillor Narendhira and the Committee agreed to the following amendment highlighted.

*'The Committee is concerned that the current terminology is not specific enough and such children may therefore not be in receipt of an education sufficient to enable them to follow their subsequent chosen career paths.'*

*The committee requests that the Chair of Barnet's Children Education and Safeguarding Committee write to the Secretary of State for Education to request that should parents elect to educate their child at home, then they must register their intent to do so with the Local Education Authority.*

*The committee also requests to ask for a definition on what is considered a 'suitable education' for children who are in receipt of Elective Home Education.*

*The Committee is concerned that, although some children may benefit from elective home education, the current terminology is not specific enough and such children may therefore not be in receipt of an education sufficient to enable them to follow their subsequent chosen career paths.'*

The Committee further requested they can be provided with a definition of what is considered a 'suitable education' for children who are in receipt of Elective Home Education. **[Action for the Chief Executive and Director of Education and Learning]**

The Committee had the opportunity to question officers and discuss the report.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. That the Committee note the report.**
- 2. That the Committee approves the Draft Elective Home Education Policy set out in Appendix A as a basis for consultation with families who educate children at home and other stakeholders.**
- 3. That the Committee note the information set out in the exempt Appendix B.**
- 4. That the Committee authorise the Executive Director, Children's Services to approve the final version of the policy, in consultation with the CES Chairman, taking account of consultation responses.**

**8. POST-16 EDUCATION AND SKILLS STRATEGY**

The Chairman introduced the report sought the Committees approval for the Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy for Barnet for the period 2021 to 2024. The Strategy sets out the challenges facing young people in Barnet in accessing appropriate education, training and employment and the council's plans for extending the opportunities available to young people, particularly those from disadvantaged groups, and for keeping the number of young people who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) to a minimum.

The Committee had the opportunity to question officers and discuss the report.

**RESOLVED -**

- 1. That the Committee note the report.**
- 2. That the Committee approves the Post-16 Education and Skills Strategy set out in Appendix A.**
- 3. That the Committee authorises officers to work with secondary schools interested in developing dedicated technical and vocational education**

**provision to identify suitable premises and by considering a joint approach to central government to secure the necessary capital and revenue funding.**

**9. FAMILY SERVICES QUARTERLY UPDATE**

The Director for Children Services introduced the report which proved the Committee with an update on Family Services progress against key areas and asks Members to note and scrutinise performance data, that can be found in Appendix 1.

The Committee had the opportunity to question officers and discuss the report.

**RESOLVED - That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee is asked to note and provide comments on the performance information summarised in the report, and provided in Appendix 1.**

**10. FAMILY SERVICES ANNUAL COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS REPORT 2020/21**

The Director of Children's Services introduced the report which provided the Committee with an overview of the complaints and compliments received in Family Services in the period 1 April 2020 – 31 March 2021. The report also reflected the progress that the service had made in how complaints could be used to learn and improve service delivery.

The Committee had the opportunity to question officers and discuss the report.

**RESOLVED - That the Children, Education and Safeguarding Committee note and agree the report.**

**11. COMMITTEE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME**

RESOLVED The Committee noted the work programme.

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

None.

**13. 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act (as amended) –Information relating to any individual.**

**14. ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION - APPENDIX B [EXEMPT]**

**RESOLVED – That the information contained within the exempted report be noted.**

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

None.

The meeting finished at 8.45 pm

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