



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Children, Environment and Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children, Environment and Leisure Policy & Scrutiny Committee** held on Monday 20 November at 7pm at **Westminster City Hall, 5 Strand, London WC2 5HR.**

Members Present: Councillors Andrew Smith (Chairman), Rita Begum, Iain Bott, Melvyn Caplan, Peter Cuthbertson, Aicha Less and Robert Rigby.

Also present: Councillor Richard Holloway (Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Young People) and Councillor David Harvey (Cabinet Member for Environment, Sport and Community).

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Nick Evans, Eugene Moriarty, Ann Townshend, Annie Ee and Aki Turan.

1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 It was noted that there were no changes to the Membership.
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed Councillor Richard Holloway (Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Young People) and Councillor David Harvey (Cabinet Member for Environment, Sport and Community) to the meeting.
- 1.3 The Chairman advised that Councillor David Harvey (Cabinet Member for Environment, Sport and Community) would not be answering questions at the meeting. Any questions that Members had regarding his portfolio would be placed on the Committee's Action Tracker.
- 1.4 The Chairman welcomed Chris Cotton, Chair of the Advisory Board, who would be introducing the Libraries Advisory Board Report.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 No further declarations of interests in respect of items to be discussed were made, other than those noted in the circulated schedule as set out below in paragraph 2.2.
- 2.2 Table of Member's interests tabled at the Committee Meeting was as follows:

Councillor/Member of the Children, Environment and Leisure P&S Committee	Organisation	Nature of Interest
Iain Bott	One Westminster	Non-Voting Member of the Board
Aicha Less	Portman Children's Centre	Governor
Robert Rigby	Our Lady's Secondary School, Hackney	Governor
	Local Authority Governor Appointment Panel	Member
	London Marathon Charitable Trust	Trustee

3 MINUTES

- 3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2017 be approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

4 TRACKERS AND WORK PROGRAMME

4.1 ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKERS

- 4.1.1 **RESOLVED:** That the Action and Recommendation Trackers be noted.

4.2 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

- 4.2.1 **RESOLVED:** The Committee noted that Therapy Support, the Green City Action Plan, and the Safeguarding of Children would be reviewed at their next meeting.

5 CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, SPORT AND COMMUNITY

- 5.1 The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member which covered current and forthcoming issues in his Portfolio.

6 CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES, YOUNG PEOPLE

- 6.1 The Committee received a written update from the Cabinet Member who responded to questions on the following topics:

- the reducing in funding from MOPAC for the Integrated Gangs Unit and the opportunities of securing funding from elsewhere in the future.
- the improvement in delivering the transfer programme from SEN statements to EHC plans and the measures that had been taken to improve the service.
- the separation from Tri-Borough to the proposed Bi-Borough Children's, Adults and Public Health integrated commissioning function.
- the focus on improving the Council's short break offer.
- the improvement of PSHE lessons in schools.
- the future delivery of the Troubled Families Programme.
- the particular difficulties that small primary schools might face with the introduction of the new National Funding Formula.

6.2 **ACTIONS:**

1. That the funding relating to the short breaks bid from the Leader's My Westminster Programme be sent to the Committee Members.
2. That the draft Bi-Borough structure chart be circulated to Committee Members.

7 **CITY OF WESTMINSTER LIBRARIES ADVISORY BOARD**

- 7.1 The Committee received a report outlining the launch of the new independent Libraries Advisory Board. The Committee noted the key areas of work completed in setting up the Board, that it had held its first full session with external "witness" speakers and that it had been established to build the positive case for the future of local authority libraries.
- 7.2 The Committee welcomed Chris Cotton, Chair of the Advisory Board, who outlined what the Board had achieved to date and who contributed to the discussion especially on how libraries were becoming important community hubs by providing a variety of services to the whole population rather than just lending books. The Committee considered that libraries were seen as trusted spaces which provided valuable services and the importance for trained staff to be available to deliver these services.
- 7.3 The Committee discussed the Board's Work Programme, how technology was changing the operating environment of libraries, the diversity of library users across Westminster and the importance of partnership working with other organisations and the Voluntary Sector. The Committee encouraged the Board to look at different library models for the future management of libraries and explore how libraries might operate in five to ten years. The Committee noted that they would have further opportunities in the coming months to input into the final report.
- 7.4 **RESOLVED:** The Committee made the following comments which would be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sport and Community for consideration:

1. The Committee welcomed the work that had been achieved in establishing the Library Advisory Board and the time given by the Members of the Board to look at the future of Westminster libraries in detail.
2. The Committee welcomed the focus on how digital technology had changed the role of libraries and would continue to change it in the future.
3. The Committee highlighted the diversity of library users in Westminster and the importance of the Board looking at how the service could meet the needs of different users in different parts of the City.
4. The Committee urged the Board to look at Best Practice elsewhere and to look at different models of provision.
5. The Committee highlighted the role of libraries as a trusted space offering support, advice and access to services and the role that library staff played in delivering these services.

8 ANNUAL LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS REPORT 2016-17

- 8.1 The Committee received a report highlighting the role of the Corporate Parent, the educational outcomes of Looked after Children (LAC) and Care Leavers and some analysis in relation to the decline in the number of LAC within Westminster and the significant increase in unaccompanied minors that had self-presented to Westminster during 2016-17. The Committee noted the impact that this had on the overall LAC and Care Leaver population.
- 8.2 The Committee welcomed the legislative changes arising from the Children and Social Work Act 2017 that included the Council extending its duties to care leavers up until 25 years and the publication of a Local Offer. The Committee discussed how the Council proposed to help these young people by recruiting a Post 16 Co-Ordinator that would support the young people with housing, health and job opportunities and that this guidance should continue as long as the young people needed support. The Committee noted the difficulties in recruiting foster carers living in London.
- 8.3 The Committee considered the importance of continuously improving the educational attainment of Looked After Children by working with schools and noted that any progress needed to take into account their performance prior to entering the care system. The Committee further considered the difficulty in predicting whether the increase in unaccompanied asylum seeking children would continue, remain the same or reduce in the future.
- 8.4 **RESOLVED:** The Committee made the following comments which would be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Young People for consideration:
 1. The Committee welcomed the trend in the reduced number of children going into care and the improvements in achieving placement stability.

2. The Committee highlighted the challenges of unaccompanied asylum seeking children and the importance of on-going support to reduce this particular burden on the City.
3. The Committee welcomed the extension of the Children and Social Work Act 2017 to support and help Care Leavers secure employment and housing tenancy agreements.
4. The Committee highlighted the success of Westminster in improving the education attainment of our Looked After Children.

9 REPORTS OF ANY URGENT SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

- 9.1 The Chairman advised that there was nothing to report.

10 TERMINATION OF MEETING

- 10.1 The meeting ended at 8.37pm.

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____