



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

**CHILDREN, ENVIRONMENT AND LEISURE
POLICY & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
13 MARCH 2017
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children, Environment and Leisure Policy & Scrutiny Committee** held on Monday 13 March 2017 at 7pm at **Westminster City Hall, 64 Victoria Street, London SW1E 6QP.**

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

Co-opted Members: Louise McCullough, Ann Townshend, Eugene Moriarty and Brenda Morrison.

Also present: Councillor Richard Holloway (Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Young People).

Apologies for Absence: Councillor David Harvey, Councillor Nick Evans, 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) to the meeting.
- 1.3 The Chairman advised that Councillor David Harvey (Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community) would not be attending the meeting. Any questions that Members had regarding his portfolio would be placed on the Committee's Action Tracker.
- 1.4 The Chairman also welcomed Hend Abdel Rahman, Vice-Chair of Westminster Parent Participation Group (WPPG) and Annalisa Saba (WPPG), to the meeting who took part in the discussion on Improving the Local Offer for 0-25 Year olds with SEN and Disabilities.

2. DECLARATION 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	Paddington Academy	Governor
	One Westminster	Non-Voting Member of the Board
Melvyn Caplan	Local Area Board for Career Academy at Paddington Academy	Board Member
Louise McCullough,	St Vincent de Paul Primary School	Governor
	St Matthews CE Primary School	Governor
	Renaissance Foundation, E2	Trustee and Mentor for Young People
Eugene Moriarty	St Augustine's Church of England School	Headteacher
Robert Rigby	Our Lady's Secondary School, Hackney	Governor
	Local Authority Governor Appointment Panel	Member
	London Marathon Charitable Trust	Trustee
Ann Townshend	St Barnabas' CE Primary School	Headteacher

3. MINUTES

- 3.1 **RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2017 be approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

4. ACTION AND RECOMMENDATION TRACKERS AND COMMITTEE 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 ACTIONS

1. That an item on Youth Services and the Westminster Youth Foundation be added to the Work Programme.
2. That recycling be included in the Greener City Action Plan item being reviewed at the next meeting.

- 4.2.2 **RESOLVED:** That the Committee Work Programme be noted.

5. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION: CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, SPORTS AND COMMUNITY

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

6. QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION: CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND YOUNG PEOPLE

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

- the increased uptake by eligible families of the two year old child care places.
- the number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child Refugees under the Council's care and the operation of the National Dispersal Scheme.
- the forthcoming consultation with schools regarding school budgets.
- the difficulty of projecting future pupil numbers for all schools.

- the continuation of the successful FGM safeguarding multi-agency project.
- the difficulties in delivering the transfer programme from SEN statements to EHC plans and the measures that had been taken to improve the service.

6.2 ACTIONS

1. That the target uptake for the two year old places for 2016-2017 as well as the percentage improvement of the uptake be sent to the Committee.
2. That officers contact Councillor Aicha Less to discuss identifying hard to reach groups to make them aware of the free two year old child places.
3. That historical data as well as statistics be taken into consideration when projecting future pupil numbers for all schools.
4. That an update on the Council's FGM programme be sent to the Committee.
5. That the amount of money claimed using the Payment by Results (PbR) claim system for the Troubled Families Programme be sent to the Committee.

7. IMPROVING THE LOCAL OFFER FOR 0-25 YEAR OLDS WITH SEN AND DISABILITIES

- 7.1 The Committee received a report providing an overview of the current Local Offer for children and young people (0-25) with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND). The Committee noted that the Children and Families Act 2014 required the local authority to publish a Local Offer which referred to both the provision of services and to the web-based platform for accessing information on the services available.
- 7.2 The Committee heard that Westminster's SEND Local Offer website – <http://localoffer.westminster.gov.uk> underwent a complete refresh in 2016 to make it significantly more interactive and an accessible way of finding information about the Local Offer. The site was developed in collaboration with key stakeholders, parents/careers and children and young people with SEND and consultation and their feedback continues to drive improvements as well as identifying development opportunities for the SEND Offer.
- 7.3 The Committee welcomed Annalisa Saba and Hend Abdel Rahman from the Westminster Parent Participation Group (WPPG) who shared their reflections and experiences of the Local Offer in Westminster and considered that the biggest gaps in support were around the diagnosis and transition areas. The Committee noted that WPPG had contributed to shaping the Local Offer by conducting a consultation with parents to see what the 'Local Offer' meant to them and that the Council were committed to more co-production of services with user groups.

7.4 The Committee discussed the need to review and improve the Local Offer to ensure that services were accessible and relevant for parents which included: accessing universal services, introducing supported employment, personnel budgets and increasing the number of providers of short breaks. The Committee noted the need for assessments and services to address the range of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and the importance of ensuring adequate promotion of services covering the whole range of SEND needs.

7.5 The Chairman thanked everyone who had given up their time to attend the meeting and contribute to the discussion.

7.6 **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 report and highlighted the need for the engagement of parents and young people in the re-design of services.
2. The Committee welcomed the commitment to more co-production of services including the engagement in the re-design of the council services.
3. The Committee highlighted the need for assessments and services to address the range of special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from mild to the severe; and the importance of ensuring adequate promotion of services covering the whole range of SEND needs.
4. The Committee particularly welcomed the move towards enabling easier access to services for parents and young people, the priority of streamlining assessments and the efforts towards providing stronger signposting to services on the Council's Website.

8. SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERING ACROSS THE CITY

8.1 The Committee received a report providing an overview of the four services that the Council commission and the social and economic contribution made by volunteers. The Committee noted the vital input that volunteering made across the City and that their crucial contribution was being recognised and encouraged through City for All.

8.2 The Committee heard details of the developing framework for the council's new social value strategy to further develop volunteering and the ways people could contribute to the place they live, work or visit. The Committee noted that there were many ways a person could volunteer and that in addition to the economic benefits, volunteering could play an important role in changing lives for the better.

The Committee also heard about the work of Time and Talents, a social enterprise that supported the placement of skilled employee volunteers within the local community.

8.3 The Committee discussed connecting with organisations of all sizes to encourage localised volunteering and the importance of being specific with them as to what the Council wanted to achieve through volunteering opportunities. The Committee further discussed value for money, the take up of volunteering opportunities, the need to prevent duplication and the possibility of using partners such as BIDs to encourage localised volunteering.

8.4 The Chairman thanked everyone who had given up their time to attend the meeting and contribute to the discussion.

8.5 **ACTION**

1. That officers contact Baker Street Quarters to see how they manage their various projects through volunteering.

8.6 **RESOLVED:** The Committee made the following comments which would be forwarded to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sports and Community for consideration:

1. The Committee welcomed the ambition to increase volunteering in the City.
2. The Committee encouraged an increased engagement with a range of businesses, institutions and universities to encourage volunteering amongst their staff.
3. The Committee urged the Council to use partners such as BIDs and local charities to encourage localised volunteering across the City.

9. **SCHOOL ORGANISATION AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY**

9.1 The Committee received a report outlining pupil place planning in Westminster and the draft School Organisation and Investment Strategy 2017 which provided details on current projection of pupil numbers and opportunities for providing new school places covering a 10 year period.

9.2 The Committee heard that the situation was very similar to last year in that there was a significant surplus of primary school places but very little spare capacity in secondary schools. The Committee noted to address this, the Council was progressing with the expansion of secondary schools and work had begun at the first Westminster City School which would be completed in 2018. The

Committee also noted that the Council was in discussion with individual primary schools, academy sponsors and the diocesan authorities regarding appropriate measures to manage the current surplus of primary places.

9.3 The Committee discussed the importance of taking into consideration local trends when projecting pupil numbers, the creative ways and principals that would guide Westminster in providing more pupil places, the opportunities to work with academy sponsors to assist in delivering additional places and that many secondary school pupils living in neighbouring borough liked to attend Westminster's secondary schools.

9.4 The Chairman thanked everyone who had given up their time to attend the meeting and contribute to the discussion.

9.5 **ACTION**

1. That a briefing note be sent on the measures being taken regarding the number of vacant primary school places and the possibility of schools sharing staff.

9.6 **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 noted the difficulty in assessing and projecting future pupil numbers for Westminster's school population.
2. The Committee highlighted that the current need for additional secondary school places might lead to excessive surplus places in future years.
3. The Committee noted the attractiveness of Westminster schools to children living in neighbouring boroughs and the need for the supply of places to meet this need.
4. The Committee highlighted the close engagement with Academies and Free schools to ensure that provision for additional secondary school places was made in areas of greatest need.

10. UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING ISSUES (verbal update – see agenda item 10)

10.1 The Chairman advised that there was nothing to report.

11. TERMINATION OF MEETING

10 .1 The meeting ended at 8.59pm.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____