



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Children, Sport & Leisure Policy & Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children, Sport & Leisure Policy & Scrutiny Committee** held on **Monday 26th January, 2015**, Rooms 5, 6 & 7 - 17th Floor, City Hall.

Members Present: Councillors Brian Connell (Chairman), Paul Church, Barbara Grahame, Karen Scarborough, Papyia Qureshi and Robert Rigby.

Co-Opted Members: Smita Bora, Annie Ee, Darren Guttridge, Brenda Morrison and Aki Turan.

Also Present: Councillor Danny Chalkley (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) and Councillor Barbara Arzymanow.

Apologies for Absence: Richard Beddoe and Louise McCullough

1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 It was noted that Councillor Karen Scarborough would be substituting for Councillor Iain Bott.
- 1.2 The Chairman welcomed Councillor Danny Chalkley (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) and Councillor Barbara Arzymanow who took part in the Early Help Strategy to the meeting.
- 1.4 The Chairman also welcomed Kevin Jones, Interim Director of Children's Services to his first meeting and looked forward to his support and contribution to the Committee.
- 1.5 The Chairman advised that Councillor Steve Summers would not be attending the meeting. Any questions that Members had regarding his portfolio would be placed on the Committee's Action Tracker.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 Councillor Barbara Arzymanow declared that she was a Local Authority Governor for Mary Paterson and Dorothy Gardner Early Years Nursery Schools.
- 2.2 Councillor Karen Scarborough declared that she was a Governor of St Mary's of the Angels Catholic Primary School.
- 2.3 No further declarations of interests in respect of items to be discussed were made, other than those noted in the circulated schedule.

3 MINUTES

- 3.1 **Resolved:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2014 were approved for signature by the Chairman as a true and correct record of the proceedings.

4 ACTION TRACKERS

- 4.1 Councillor Danny Chalkley advised that a letter was being sent to Nicky Morgan MP regarding how school meals were going to be assessed in the future.
- 4.2 **Resolved:** That the Action and Recommendation Trackers be noted.

5 CABINET MEMBER FOR SPORTS, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES (TO FOLLOW)

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

5.2 ACTIONS:

- 1. Notes to be sent to the P&S Committee regarding the new location of the Paddington Children's Library and whether the Marylebone Library could remain in its temporary position.
- 2. Briefing Note to be sent to the P&S Committee on the planned improvements to be made to Broadly Street Gardens.

a Update from the Cabinet Member for Sports Leisure and Open Spaces

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6 CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

- 6.1 The Committee received an update from the Cabinet Member who responded to questions relating to:

- George Elliot Primary School.
- the support that children receive during Year 6-7 Transition.
- Westminster topping the national league table for school attendance.
- the support that the Council offers school governing bodies.
- the decline in GCSE results, partly attributable to the revised methodology.
- the fostering and adoption of children.
- the work of the Youth Offending Team.

6.2 ACTION

1. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People to write to the Headteacher of Soho Parish Primary School to congratulate him on the schools Year 6 examination results.

7 THE EARLY HELP STRATEGY 2014-2018

- 7.1 The Committee received a report containing the Early Help Strategy 2014-2018 which set out the Council's Strategy for Early Help Services for children and young people aged 0-18. The Committee heard that a key objective was to revise the service model of investment in universal services together with key partners in line with priority outcomes, in particular in respect of Play, children's Centres and Youth Services. The Committee noted that consultation was now being undertaken with service users and key stakeholders on the specific proposals set out in the report.
- 7.2 Andrew Christie, Tri-Borough Executive Director of Children's Services, advised that the primary aim of the proposed new model was to improve service delivery by making the best use of reducing Council funds by structuring the service in a more efficient way and joining up with health to ensure that families who needed the Council's services most could access them as early as possible.
- 7.3 Jayne Vertkin, Head of Early Help Services, discussed the consultation taking place with parents, both in Children Centres and using an on-line survey. She advised that feedback to date had been consistent in that investment should continue to be available for universal services, especially amongst groups at Essendine, Marshall Street and Micky Star Children's Services, who would not be entitled to the same level of play provision if resources were targeted at vulnerable groups. The Committee noted that all Children's Centres would

remain open and stay and play sessions would continue at some level at each Children Centre for all families.

- 7.4 Paul Williamson, Head of Extended Services, discussed the consultation taking place on Play Services. He advised that officers had looked at the provision provided by other Local Authorities and that the existing in-house service had relatively high management and administrative costs compared with other ways of providing the service. He further advised that the initial findings of the review had found that schools could be very effective in the delivery of childcare and play services and that there were a number of third sector organisations that already provided childcare and play in Westminster at no cost to the Council.
- 7.5 Rachael Wright-Turner, Tri-Borough Director of Commissioning, discussed the consultation taking place on Early Help Youth Services. She advised that current contracts ended in September 2015 which gave the service the opportunity to enhance the early help offer and arrangements within future contracts. She advised that young people were invited to feedback via an online survey and that they would be liaising with youth providers to deliver workshops in each locality in late January/February to further capture young people's views and ideas. Rachael then outlined that there would be universal provision for young people but also targeted services to reduce youth offending.
- 7.6 The Committee then heard from Councillor Barbara Arzymanow who spoke about the findings of her report 'Future for Nursery Education in Westminster' Councillor Arzymanow advised that studies had shown that vulnerable children benefited most from early intervention and that Westminster had a good nursery provision infrastructure which could be used to share good practice. She further advised that a Project Officer should be given overall responsibility to ensure that all nursery provision providers were applying for the funding that they were entitled to by the Government. Barbara then summarised her recommendations for the Committee. (The recommendations are attached at Appendix A of the minutes).
- 7.7 The following key themes emerged from the Committee's discussion:
- the acknowledgement that the consultation process had been widely publicised throughout Westminster and the level of engagement by parents, youth groups and young people through the organised workshops and the on-line surveys so far had been good.
 - the advantages and disadvantages of providing universal services versus targeted services for early years provision.
 - the importance of introducing an integrated pathway in order to publish an early year offer to families within their child's first year so families could see what was available to them. This would hopefully increase the take up of the free care opportunities for two year olds for families that meet the criteria.
 - the potential to utilise the health visiting service to improve access to the services in the future.

- the importance of identifying and working with families in need, especially encouraging those families to sign up for the 2 year old offer.
- the benefits of changing the balance to move towards a more targeted service and the importance of effective communication and partnerships between key partners.
- the possibility of schools taking on the responsibility for play services and the commissioning of the third sector to take responsibility and manage play services.
- the cost of play services and the eligibility criteria needed to receive a discount on After School and/or school holiday play provision.

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

7.9 **ACTION**

1. Briefing note to be sent to the P&S Committee setting out the fees charged at the various Play Services in Westminster.

7.10 **RESOLVED:**

1. That the Committee acknowledged and recognised the proactive and effective communication of the three consultations led by the Westminster Communications Team. The Committee are reassured of this by the tone of the debate, which was both pragmatic and constructive.
2. That the Committee welcomed the potential to utilise the health visiting service to improve access to the services in the future. The Committee requested to be kept updated on progress in implementation including targeted support for those who need it most as outlined in the Early Help Strategy.
3. That the change in balance of use of Children's Centres towards more targeted families was appropriate and where the Council's resources should be spent at times of financial constraint.
4. That further promotion of the two-year old offer and an update on uptake at regular intervals be reported back to the Committee. The Committee endorsed the importance of early intervention in a child's development.
5. That Councillor Barbara Arzymanow be thanked for preparing her report on the changing landscape of nursery provision in Westminster and that officers prepare a response to the salient points and conclusion of the report, especially regarding how best practice can be shared across institutions and what role (if any) Westminster City Council can play in implementing the recommendations.

8 SCHOOL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2014

8.1 The Committee received a report summarising the outcomes of this year's tests and examinations in primary and secondary schools in Westminster and the key priorities for school improvement that emerge from the results. The report also included summary data on OFSTED inspection outcomes for Westminster schools.

8.2 The Committee heard from Ian Heggs, Tri-Borough Director of Schools Quality and Standards and Richard Standley, Assistant Director, (Schools Standards) who discussed with the Committee the provisional education achievement data that had been set out in the School Performance Report. The Committee also discussed each point of assessment, future challenges and considered key areas of success and areas to be developed.

8.3 The Committee noted the following points:

- Overall performance at all Key Stages in schools in Westminster continued to be above national averages and high in relation to other London boroughs.
- In Key Stage 1 teacher assessments, the percentage of primary children achieving expected National Curriculum levels in reading, writing and mathematics remained above the national level.
- In Key Stage 2 tests, the percentage of primary children achieving expected National Curriculum levels in reading, writing and mathematics placed Westminster top in London and fifth nationally.
- GCSE results went down slightly but less than the national fall so Westminster had maintained its 9th position out of all Local Authorities in England.

8.4 The following key themes emerged from the Committee's discussion:

- the importance of maintaining the educational levels in Westminster schools.
- the importance of raising the attainment of Looked After Children.
- the importance of strong leadership and governance within schools.
- the new curriculum and the potential effect that it might have on schools.
- the important role that Tri-Borough and the Local Authority continues to play in the education of children in Westminster, especially with the vast expertise available, the identifying and intervening in failing schools and the opportunity for schools to 'buy in' specialist provision such as music.

8.5 The Committee congratulated the schools and teachers for the continued progress, acknowledged the important role of school governors and the value and importance of good leadership and succession planning in schools.

8.6 ACTION

1. The Committee requested that educational data was available for all of Westminster schools in order for the Committee to make like for like comparisons.

8.7 **RESOLVED:** That the report be endorsed.

9 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

9.1 The Committee agreed that Year 6-7 Transition be re-added to the Work Programme and that an additional meeting be organised to meet the demands of the Work Programme.

9.2 The Committee agreed that it would consider Volunteering Contracts and the Strategy for the new Leisure Facility Management Contract at its next meeting on 9 February

9.3 **RESOLVED:** That Year 6-7 Transition be re-added to the Work Programme and that an additional P&S Committee meeting be organised in April 2015.

10 REPORTS OF ANY URGENT SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

EXEMPT REPORT UNDER LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

10.1 **RESOLVED:** That under Section 100 (A) (4) and schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business because it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information on the grounds shown below:

| <u>Item No</u> | <u>Grounds</u> | <u>Para of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act</u> |
|----------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| 9. | Information relating to an individual | 1 |

11. UPDATE ON SAFEGUARDING ISSUES (verbal update – see agenda item 9)

11.1 The Committee received an update from the Director of Children's Services on one case.

12. APPENDIX A: EARLY YEARS PRESENTATION

Barbara Arzymanow Early Years Presentation to P&S 26th January Recommendations

1. Support for the “Early Help Strategy” document. This covers early year’s Intervention all the way to adulthood. There are known critical points during the course of a child’s education where a little support can avoid a permanent derailment.
2. Recognition that early year’s intervention is more effective and cheaper than delaying until problems become more apparent. Nursery Education is particularly important to needy children.
3. Ideally we should identify the children most in need before they’re 2.
4. Increased focus on part time places for 3 & 4 year-olds and selected 2 year-olds.
5. Benefit from the strong building blocks in place particularly for maintained nursery schools.
6. Formalise income streams to the maintained nursery schools:- teaching childminders, educating NSs teachers and helping poor performing NSs in the borough.
7. Coordinate message to parents through family centre hubs to ensure full awareness of what nursery education offers.
8. **One of my most important recommendations** is that one project officer should be given overall responsibility for coordinating all these complicated financial administrative matters so that liaison with the Government, nursery providers and the Council runs smoothly. A project officer would also keep both Westminster and Tri borough informed. Nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools must be made aware of all possible ways to rearrange themselves so as to benefit from all available Government money.
9. The project officer could also keep a watchful eye on possible ways of reducing costs without effecting services for example, sharing facilities or sharing activities.
10. Nobody should miss out on their free 15 hours entitlement or their top-up tax credit through ignorance. Posters about child-minders and the 15 hour offer have been widely displayed. Publicity relating to nursery schools and nursery classes would benefit from a similar approach.
11. Parents on higher incomes would still find the full top-up payment of £20-30 per day a very good deal and it will help those who cannot afford the top up. The nursery schools need more help with publicity because parents are more

likely to hear about nursery classes in their preferred future primary schools. A good primary school does have more bargaining power but if the child has some need the maintained school really is a better place to deal with it.

12. Help in the move to bring health visitors under local councils in the autumn this year. For example, the Personal Child Health Record better known as the Red Book could have a section on education. Alternatively, we could have a Green book for education. Currently there is nowhere a parent can track their child's education and thereby encouraging them to take pride in their achievements.
13. Under capacity providers should be encouraged to take up the two year offer and increasing the uptake of the 15 hour offer with both 3 & 4year olds and 2 year olds by targeting places. This requires a concerted marketing effort and greater collaboration and communication in family information services.
14. To capitalise on the outstanding Ofsted inspections and offer help Special Needs. Children in need of any additional support are definitely best off in the maintained nursery schools.

CHAIRMAN: _____

DATE _____