



CITY OF WESTMINSTER

MINUTES

Family and People Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Minutes of a meeting of the **Family and People Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held on **Monday 4th February, 2019**, Room 3.1, 3rd Floor, 5 Strand, London, WC2 5HR.

Members Present: Councillors Jonathan Glanz (Chairman), Margot Bright, Nafsika Butler-Thalassis, Maggie Carman, Peter Freeman, Patricia McAllister, Emily Payne and Selina Short

Also Present: Councillor Heather Acton

1 MEMBERSHIP

- 1.1 The Chairman welcomed Councillor Margot Bright as a new member of the Committee who had replaced Councillor Lorraine Dean who was now the Deputy Cabinet Member for Family Services and Public Health.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- 2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES

RESOLVED:

- 3.1 That the Minutes of the Family and People Services Policy and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 3 December 2018 be approved, subject to paragraph 4.2 being amended to read "...Learning Disabilities Presentation Launch..".

4 CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

- 4.1 Councillor Heather Acton (Cabinet Member for Family Services and Public Health), provided a briefing on key issues within her portfolio. The Committee also heard from Senel Arkut (Head of Health Partnerships and Development), Melissa Caslake (Bi-Borough Executive Director of Childrens Services), Sarah Newman (Director of Family Services), Annabel Saunders (Assistant Director

for Commissioning and Innovation) and James Benson (Central London Community Healthcare NHS Trust).

4.2 Councillor Acton provided an update on the following additional items of interest:

- Shisha – She had recently attended a meeting convened by the MP for Birmingham Ladywood to explore the potential to incorporate the smoking of shisha into the Licensing Act 2003. It was proposed to invite all local authorities who had attended this meeting to the next Westminster Shisha assembly to raise awareness of the dangers of smoking shisha.
- Dementia and Mental Health – The Cabinet was due to receive a training session on dementia which would also be open to all members of the Council. If members were unable to attend however a further session would be made available. It was also currently Childrens Mental Health Week and the Director of Public Health would shortly be publishing an annual report titled 'The Health and Wellbeing of Young People in Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster'. This would be circulated to the Committee electronically.
- Speech and Language Therapy – Negotiations were still ongoing with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) regarding the provision of Early Years Speech and Language Therapy with a particular focus on providing children with more specialist needs assistance at an earlier stage.

4.3 Funding - The Committee was interested to learn what implications recent reductions in funding would have for the Dementia Strategy and the Speech and Language Therapy Sessions. It was noted that positive negotiations for both areas were ongoing with a holistic approach being taken to ensure there was adequate cover. Significant work had been undertaken with the CCG to design future specifications for the services with a more evidence-based approach being utilised to target offers of support. As part of this work, the interface between the early years' service and the school age service was also being assessed in order to improve school transitions for children and young people.

4.4 Flu Vaccine - Concern was expressed that levels of uptake for the flu vaccine was slightly down on last year. It was confirmed that there was ongoing work with schools to promote uptake with five of the eleven schools who had not fixed an appointment now having signed up to the programme. Public Health England was also working closely with local GPs to disseminate information. The Health and Wellbeing Board was due to receive a report in March 2019 that would cover barriers to uptake of immunisations and childhood vaccinations and this could be circulated to the Committee.

4.5 Serious Youth Violence – The Committee requested an update on the approach taken to tackle youth violence. The Committee was interested to learn that a public health approach had been adopted with an emphasis on empowering communities to help reduce youth violence. No extra funding had been made available for the initiative; however the Serious Youth Violence

Officer Task Group met regularly and placed a greater emphasis on collaborative working across Public Health, Council departments, the police and the voluntary and community sectors to adapt to the changing nature of violence.

- 4.6 The Committee also discussed Nursing Homes, Rough Sleepers and the Better Care Fund.

5 CHILD OBESITY IN WESTMINSTER

- 5.1 Sarah Crouch (Public Health), Gaynor Driscoll (Head of Public Health Commissioning) and Dr Alison Treadstone (Chief Nutritionist at Public Health England) introduced the report, which provided an update on childhood obesity in Westminster.

- 5.2 In response to questions the Committee was informed that the height and weight of schoolchildren in Westminster was measured annually. This data revealed that there had been a significant decline in rates of obesity amongst reception age children in Westminster since 2016/17. This was a positive outcome of local efforts to prevent obesity across maternity and early years services, however these trends masked a widening inequality between children of the most and least deprived wards.

- 5.3 Further information on the work undertaken in Westminster in response to the issue of obesity was requested. The Committee noted that Westminster's Public Health Team had developed a new programme entitled Tackling Childhood Obesity Together, which aimed to halt and reverse the rising trend in childhood obesity across Westminster and Kensington and Chelsea. As part of the whole systems approach taken in Westminster, opportunities were identified within the Council and with partners to make positive changes to the wider environment that contributed to reducing childhood obesity. The Committee discussed in detail the following areas of opportunity that had been identified:

- Water Fountains – Members were pleased to note that Westminster's leisure contractor had installed water fountains in entrance foyers that were accessible to the public and had banned price promotions on sugary drinks. Community Services was also improving access by installing water fountains in all WCC libraries. The Committee was also particularly keen to support the promotion of water fountains in schools to reduce consumption of sugary drinks and help combat obesity and tooth decay. The Committee agreed that a letter be sent to the Cabinet Member for Family Services and Public Health requesting that the installation and use of water fountains across Westminster as a way of helping tackle childhood obesity, as well as realising other benefits, be promoted.
- Fast Food Outlets – 58 food businesses had achieved the Healthier Catering Commitment award, a joint initiative led by Environmental Health, which made it easier for residents to make healthier food choices. Work had also been undertaken with secondary schools to identify fast food outlets most used by schoolchildren. The Committee commended

the work carried out to date but following a discussion requested that a letter be sent to the Cabinet for Place Shaping and Planning requesting that investigations be undertaken into the possibility of preventing new fast food outlets from opening within a reasonable distance of schools.

- Physical Activity – The Committee noted the introduction of various physical activity initiatives to help combat obesity. These included the Council supporting schools to implement the Daily Mile initiative, of which approximately 50% of primary schools in Westminster were now actively participating in. Also, the implementation of a Junior Parkrun at Paddington Recreation Grounds was welcomed.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Committee write to the Cabinet Member for Family Services and Public Health to urge that the installation and use of water fountains across Westminster be promoted as a way of helping tackle childhood obesity, as well as realising other benefits; and
- 2) That the Committee write to the Cabinet Member for Place Shaping and Planning to investigate the possibility of preventing new fast food outlets opening within a reasonable distance of schools.

6 LOCAL CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING BOARD

- 6.1 Emma Biskupski (London Safeguarding Children Board Business Manager) provided the Committee with an overview of the draft Local Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2017/18. The report detailed work undertaken against the key priorities of reducing the harm of domestic abuse and coercive control, tackling peer on peer abuse and hearing the voice of children and young people. The report also provided the Committee with an overview of the multi-agency training provided to the children's workforce across Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea and Westminster.
- 6.2 The Committee provided feedback on the draft report requesting alterations to the formatting and layout to ensure its findings were as clear as possible. Discussions also took place on the training provided to staff on interview techniques when dealing with children, the positive work undertaken with budget hotels to combat drugs and prostitution and work carried out with the case reviews. To aid readers it was also suggested that the report contain a glossary of terms.
- 6.3 The Committee thanked Emma Biskupski for introducing the draft report and looked forward to receiving the finalised report shortly following the feedback provided.

7 ANNUAL LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN AND CARE LEAVERS REPORT 2017/18

- 7.1 Nicky Crouch (Head of Looked After Children and Specialist Services) introduced the report which provided an overview of the Local Authority's

activity to support looked after children and care leavers and the outcomes achieved.

- 7.2 The Committee was interested to note that in 2017/18, a total of 104 unaccompanied minors were located in Westminster and 35 had been dispersed through the Pan London agreement. As of 31 March 2018 Westminster were looking after 69 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and supporting a further 68 as care leavers. Trend analysis indicated that numbers of looked after children from Westminster's resident population were reducing whereas the numbers of unaccompanied minors being located in Westminster were increasing. This had the effect of pushing up the total numbers along with resulting in implications not only financially but also on the capacity and capability of the workforce to manage increasing demand.
- 7.3 In response to questions from the Committee, it was explained that most unaccompanied minors arrived in Westminster due to the physical location of certain transport hubs, in particular Victoria Coach Station. These minors would then usually be picked up by the Police or present themselves to the offices of the local authority where they would be placed under care. They were generally between the ages of 14 to 17 and where appropriate age assessments would be undertaken. Details of how age assessments were carried out was provided.
- 7.4 The Committee held a detailed discussion on the topic, which included information on the implementation of the Children and Social Work Act 2017. It was noted that local authorities had a duty and responsibility to those young people who leave care after the age of 18 years and up to the age of 25. At the end of March 2018, 58% of care leavers aged 19, 20 and 21 years old were in education, employment and training. Whilst this was positive, further progress was required and remained a key area for improvement. Work continued to develop partnerships with Council colleagues and external businesses to create a wider range of ambitious and rewarding apprenticeships and employment opportunities.
- 7.5 The Committee expressed its thanks to the team for all its hard work and efforts in supporting looked after children and care leavers and congratulated it for its accomplishments under difficult circumstances.

8 2018/19 WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKER

- 8.1 Aaron Hardy (Policy and Scrutiny Manager) presented the Committee's Work Programme and Action Tracker.
- 8.2 The Committee agreed that the next meeting would focus on issues around sexual health. The Chairman advised that a site visit to the sexual health service at Dean Street would be organised and encouraged members to attend. Following a suggestion, the possibility of providing an update on child sexual exploitation at the next meeting would also be investigated.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Work Programme be noted;
- 2) That the Action Tracker be noted; and
- 3) That the Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust's proposal for oesophago-gastric cancer surgery be noted.

9 REPORTS OF ANY URGENCY SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

9.1 The Chairman advised there was nothing to report.

10 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Meeting ended at 8.54 pm

CHAIRMAN:

DATE
