



MINUTES

CITY OF WESTMINSTER

**Business and Children's
POLICY and SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
19th July 2021
MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS**

Minutes of a meeting of the **Business and Children's Policy and Scrutiny Committee** held virtually on 19th July 2021 at 6.30pm via Microsoft Teams.

Members Present: Councillors Karen Scarborough (Chairman), Lorraine Dean, Richard Elcho, Christabel Flight, Aziz Toki, Nickie Aiken, Mark Shearer, Tim Roca and Eoghain Murphy.

Elected Representatives: Ryan Nichol (Parent Governor)

Also present: Councillor Timothy Barnes (Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning), Councillor Matthew Green (Cabinet Member for Business, Licensing and Planning), Jackie Shaw (Service Director of CAMHS and Eating Disorder Service at the Central and North West London NHS Trust), Rob Burkitt (Gambling Commission), Andrew Birleson (Gambling Commission), Raj Mistry (Executive Director of Environment & City), Kerry Simpkin (Head of Licensing Policy), Jack Shaw (Portfolio Advisor), Debbie Jackson (Executive Director Growth, Planning and Housing), Sarah Newman (Bi-Borough Executive Director of Children's Services), Aaron Hardy (Principal Policy Officer), Artemis Kassi (Lead Scrutiny Officer) and Lewis Aaltonen (Policy and Scrutiny Co-Ordinator).

1. MEMBERSHIP

1.1 Councillor Lindsey Hall was unable to attend and sent apologies. Councillor Nickie Aiken replaced Councillor Lindsey Hall for this meeting. Councillor Aicha Less was unable to attend and sent apologies. Councillor Aziz Toki replaced Councillor Aicha Less for this meeting. Wasim Butt, Marina Coleman, Mark Hewitt and Alix Ascough were unable to attend and sent their apologies.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

3.1 RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meetings held on 26th April 2021 were approved as a correct record of proceedings.

4. CAMHS UPDATE

4.1 This item was moved forward in the agenda to take place before an update from the Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning.

4.2 The Committee received a verbal update from Jackie Shaw (Service Director of CAMHS and Eating Disorder Service at the Central and Northwest London NHS Trust). The verbal update included:

- It was noted that the CAMHS service was still seeing the impact of the pandemic on children and young people, for example 51% of young people presenting in crisis to St Mary Hospital A&E were not previously known to CAMHS. This indicates that the borough needs to examine its early intervention, prevention and well-being offer for young people so they can receive help before they hit crisis point.
- Of the young people presenting to CAMHS, the service is seeing more complex cases, such as young people with eating disorders and children with autism.
- Overall, the service has seen an increase in demand across multiple age ranges as well as the severity of presentations. It was noted that young people are presenting later and in greater crisis.
- Additional funding has been received for the following programmes:
 - Kooth - a new online mental health platform for children and young people between the ages of 11 and 25, its purpose is to provide online counselling services across NWL.
 - Pre-birth to Five Programme – to provide early engagement with parents, carers, and young children.
 - 16 – 25-year-old service – developing a service for young adults.
 - Children with autism – the Committee received an update that autism diagnostic waiting times had increased over the pandemic and the service was looking at ways to reduce the waiting time.
- The Committee was informed that CAMHS had recently set up a crisis line for young people across Northwest London.

4.3 Jackie Shaw (Service Director of CAMHS and Eating Disorder Service at the Central and Northwest London NHS Trust) responded to questions on the service. The questions included:

- Members asked whether vulnerable young people had presented with gambling problems. The service sees presentations of 'gaming disorder' (addiction to online games) in young people, more commonly than problem gambling. Westminster has strong links to the National Gambling Disorder and Gaming Clinic in Earls Court and can make referrals if needed be.

- Members asked about the new CAMHS crisis line and its accessibility for young people. It was noted that the Committee would receive further information on the crisis line through the CYPMH Scrutiny Task group.
- Members asked about accessibility to and awareness of mental health services and how the council can assist CAMHS. The service is continuing to publicise its offer and is engaging with schools, GPs, and social care to ensure all are aware of available services. The service would welcome further collaboration with the council.
- Members asked whether the average age of young people presenting has changed and what the gender breakdown of service users was. It was noted that a typical crisis presentation was from a female between the ages of 13-15 years old who is self-harming and expressing suicidal ideations. No stark change in demographics was noted during the pandemic.
- Members asked about the flexibility of the service to meet young peoples needs. The service meets young people in the community and has practitioners based at the children's services hubs, it was also noted that the service has improved their virtual offer.
- Members asked about different medians available to young people to receive mental health support. It was noted that young people wanted a range of options available to them from face-to-face sessions as well as the option of communicating with professionals via instant messaging on Kooth.
- Councillor Barnes (Cabinet Member for Young People and Learning) noted that Westminster Council had developed a QR Code that linked to a directory of services available to young people in need of mental health support on the Council's website.
- Members asked about CAMHS waiting times. It was noted that Westminster is performing well and has never breached the NHS maximum waiting times standards. However, ASD (Autism) assessments, which are more specialist and require multi-disciplinary teams were taking longer. It was noted that this was reflective across London.
- The Committee asked about CAMHS engagement with the voluntary sector. It was noted that the service works closely with the mental health support teams in schools (run by MIND) and other voluntary sector partners.

4.4 ACTIONS:

1. Members requested that the CAMHS service provide a report to the Committee at a later session.
2. The Service Director for CAMHS and Eating Disorder Service will provide further information on the new CAMHS crisis line to the CYPMH Scrutiny Task group.

5. UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND LEARNING

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

- The Cabinet Member provided an update on school attendance and flooding in North Westminster. It was noted that the floods damaged some library facilities and schools, all facilities were offered immediate financial support and all facilities were operational within a week.
- Members asked about the change of leadership at Pimlico Academy and the Cabinet Member notified the Committee that they were awaiting the results of a recent Ofsted Inspection.
- Members inquired about available summer activities for young people and raised concerns on holiday hunger. The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that Free School Meals vouchers would be provided throughout the summer holidays and this has been communicated to parents.
- Members asked about catch-up funding, referencing the £6000 allocated to primary schools and £22,000 to secondary schools and whether this was enough to meet the demand.
- Members asked about the provision of laptops to vulnerable young people and if there were enough distributed to meet the need across the Borough. It was noted that Westminster Council was one of the first to start distributing equipment in August 2020 and has distributed more than the recommended amount by Ofqual.
- Members asked about primary school capacity. Demographic changes in the borough have meant there is a decreased demand for primary school places and the Council needs to assist schools to manage this change.
- Members discussed the Sir Simon Milton Westminster UTC College and its decision to pause student recruitment from the next academic year. Members raised concern and asked the Cabinet Member to commission a report on the College's future.

5.2 ACTIONS:

1. Members requested an update on Sir Simon Milton Westminster UTC College at the next scheduled Committee meeting in October 2021.

6. UPDATE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR BUSINESS, LICENSING AND PLANNING

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

- The Cabinet Member provided an update on businesses affected by the flooding in North Westminster and noted that businesses were able to access the bulky waste collection council service for free. Advice has also been issued to businesses affected by the flooding as well as hardship relief.
- Members asked about apprenticeship employment opportunities for residents in the Borough. The Committee discussed employment shortages in the hospitality sector, the Council are trying to combat this by working with local Job Centres and facilitating hospitality taster days with Westminster Kingsway College.

- Members discussed the Kickstart scheme and the lower than anticipated number of new joiners at the Council. The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that the Council are paying young people on the Kickstart scheme the London Living Wage.
- The Committee congratulated the Cabinet Member on the Al-Fresco hospitality strategy, particularly the granting of over 700 pavement licences to restaurants to provide nearly 16,000 seats for outdoor food and beverage services.
- Members raised concerns on behalf of residents on the Al-Fresco hospitality strategy. The Cabinet Member informed the Committee that they are launching a series of consultations with residents to co-design a new scheme that is suitable for both residents and businesses.
- The Committee discussed the West End Recovery and particularly the art installations within the Westminster Animation Strategy.
- Members asked for an update on how the Council are encouraging start-ups to use stalls within markets. It was noted that the Council's pitch fees are one of the lowest in London to encourage start-ups to occupy Market stalls.
- Members asked what targets have been set for the Westminster Investment Service. It was noted that the Members would receive a written response.
- Members raised concerns about the proliferation of American sweet/candy shops across the West End and if the Council could do anything about the increase in shops. The Council has limited powers in this regard.

6.2 ACTIONS

1. Members requested a written update from the Cabinet Member on the targets that have been set for the Westminster Investment Service.

7. REPORT ON GAMBLING POLICY IN WESTMINSTER

7.1 The Committee received a written report on the Council's Gambling Policy in Westminster. Cllr Matthew Green (Cabinet Member for Business, Licensing and Planning) introduced the report followed by Raj Mistry and Kerry Simpkin who both presented on the report's findings. The Committee also heard from two expert witnesses, Robert Burkitt and Andrew Birleson from the Gambling Commission. Questions on the report included:

- Members asked about the triennial review of the Council's gambling policy and whether every three years was an appropriate time frame to review the Council's policy. It was noted that many Councils want this extended to every five years to match the statutory five-year requirement for Councils to review their licensing policy.
- Members discussed the vulnerability index, the gambling harm risk index combines a number of data sets relating to different groups who were identified as being at risk to gambling related harm.
- Members asked about the council's powers to refuse gambling licenses. Previously denied applications in Harrow Road were discussed and the decision

to refuse those specific applications was attributed to gathering detailed local evidence. The Council is proposing in the new Gambling Policy to create detailed local evidence bases across the city known as Local Area Profiles.

- Members asked for assurances that the new Gambling Policy will be able collect localised evidence through Local Area Profiles and therefore be able to take into consideration the potential vulnerability of residents when applications are being made for gambling premises.
- Members discussed what conditions are imposed on gambling licenses and if they can be strengthened. It was noted the Council does impose conditions upon licenses and has the power to review the licenses.
- Members asked if the Council are engaging with reputable, well-run gambling premises' such as Casino's in the City centre. It was noted that the Council will be engaging with most gambling premises as the new Gambling Policy is being developed.
- The Chairman wanted to express her thanks to the Officers in the Council for the work they are doing to refresh the Gambling policy.

8. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

8.1 The Chairman informed Members that the Policy and Scrutiny team will be circulating a suggested list of substantial items for future Committee meetings. The Chairman updated the Committee on the progress of scrutiny task group looking into the mental health and well-being of children and young people in Westminster.

9. TERMINATION OF MEETING

9.1 The meeting ended at 8.30pm.

CHAIRMAN _____

DATE _____