

## **MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008 at 7.30pm**

PRESENT: Councillor Motley (Chair), Councillor Arnold (Vice Chair) and Councillors Ahmed, Mistry, CJ Patel and Tancred and co-opted members Mr Akisanya, Dr Levison and Mr Lorenzato.

Councillor Wharton (Lead Member, Children and Families) also attended the meeting.

Apologies for absence were received from Dr. J Reed, Mrs. L Goldbourne and Ms J Cooper (Teachers' Panel).

### **1. Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interest**

There were none.

### **2. Minutes of the previous meeting**

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the previous meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2008 be agreed as a true and accurate record.

### **3. Matter arising**

*Youth Offending Service*

Councillor Arnold enquired as to whether the Council had produced a plan for Targeted Youth Support, an initiative that involved working with those children identified as being a problem. The Assistant Director Rik Boxer clarified that the plan had been produced by March 2008 as agreed at the last meeting and already taken to the Youth Parliament Board. In responding to questions about widening the remit of the task group on school pupil robberies, the Chair stated that it would be referred to this Committee to be included in its future work programme.

*14-19 Development*

Stella Akintan confirmed that a report on the audit of staff skills and resources was likely to be presented to the next meeting of the Committee.

#### 4. **Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)**

The Committee considered the report which presented an overview of the occurrence of emotional ill health and risk factors influencing emotional health and well being for children and young people in Brent as well as the services available to support them. The report also described and broadly outlined the services provided by Central and North West London Foundation NHS Trust (CNWL), commissioned by Brent teaching PCT and the Children and Families Department of Brent Council and identified the priorities underpinning future service planning and development.

Sara Mansuralli Head of Joint Strategy & Commissioning introduced this report. She stated that Brent Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) were provided by more than one agency and within a national framework of a four tier service. She drew members' attention to a table in the report that outlined the framework and identified the services provided across the tiers. She continued that the four tier model provided a conceptual framework for ensuring that a comprehensive range of services was commissioned and available to meet the mental health needs of children, young people and families with clear pathways between the tiers and described in some detail the delivery model for each tier of provision with the associated commissioning arrangements.

With reference to an analysis of cases on the Brent CAMHS caseload members noted that propensity towards mental health disorders was influenced and increased by several factors including the following: a record of truancy; special educational needs; record of domestic violence; single adult household; social housing.

In setting out the vision for the future, Sara Mansuralli said that in 2008/09 the development in 2008/09 would be to address the fourth proxy measure for a comprehensive CAMHS introduced as part of the New Performance Framework for local authorities and their partners in October 2007. She added that the CAMHS Strategic Partnership was currently in the process of developing a joint commissioning strategy for 2008-2011 to consolidate the commissioning arrangements for CAMHS.

In response to a request by Councillor Arnold for a breakdown of the number of clients, Sara Mansuralli reiterated that CAMHS services were provided by a multi-agency which made it quite a daunting task to provide a full breakdown. However routine monitoring was carried out and frequent collection of statistics including gender and race was made. Christine Martin added that about 1,300 referrals were made to CAMHS. She continued that due to high mobility and other factors some families were slipping through the service and consequently making it difficult to engage with those families, although good partnership working between

social care teams and CAMHS was assisting in making the service more responsive to needs.

Dr Levison enquired about the level of training given to schools. Sara Mansuralli confirmed that full training was being offered to all schools including educational welfare officers to make them more aware to identify problems. In responding to a query by the Chair about the level of input by end users, Sara Mansuralli stated that the service would continue to consult with all organizations especially schools and Brent Youth Parliament in addition to their requirement to complete service users consultation and engagement document.

RESOLVED:

that the current arrangements for CAMHS in Brent and the future priorities for development be noted

#### **5. Local Area Agreement Proposals 2008, Children & Young People**

The Committee gave consideration to a report that provided an overview of Brent's Local Area Agreement (LAA) proposals and the improvement priorities for children and young people together with the initial feedback from government departmental leads on the draft improvement priorities and the process for finalisation. Accompanied by the Brent Evidence Base, the report detailed statistical analysis of the social and demographic factors underpinning the LAA priorities.

Sara Mansuralli Head of Joint Strategy & Commissioning in introducing the report stated that the new LAA which would come into force in June 2008 were being negotiated by all Councils for the period 2008-2011. The new agreements would focus on 35 improvement priorities and 18 statutory education targets taken from the national indicators set of 198 and selected to match local priorities for the borough. This was in contrast to the current LAA where the focus was on 12 'stretch targets' which formed the core agreement and were supplemented by over 100 additional indicators in the outcomes framework.

She continued that over the past six months the LSP Executive had led the process for designing Brent's LAA through a programme of consultation, evaluation of evidence and challenge. The Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership Board had been actively engaged with their partners on the proposed improvement priorities and had considered detailed evidence in relation to their nominated priorities. All suggestions had been the subject of a cross partnership scrutiny during a series of challenge workshops which were attended by a range of service providers including council services, community representatives and the voluntary

sector. All proposals were evaluated against the strategic principles and cross-cutting themes agreed by the LSP Executive. The Council had been complimented on the detailed evidence used to support the selection of priorities and the process conducted to engage partners and the wider community in formulating the LAA. Feedback from GOL and initial assessments of the draft list of priorities had been positive.

Sara Mansuralli added that once final agreement had been reached between GOL and the Council on the headline measures, there would be a period of negotiation on the detailed targets for each of the 35 indicators. She further added that whilst the ABG allocations were being passported to the previous recipients of the individual grants for 2008/09 this would not necessarily be the case for 2009/10 and with that in mind, advised service areas against making commitments for expenditure on staffing, services or premises dependent on this income beyond 31st March 2009

In welcoming the report, the Chair stated that the list of priorities identified in the report would serve as a guide list for the Committee which would be re-visited in a year's time. In responding to an enquiry by Councillor Arnold about how the LSP could have an input into the LAA including scrutiny and delivery, Sara Mansuralli said that the LSP set the underlying principles and had a collective responsibility for agreeing and overseeing targets. She undertook to provide an update on progress on some but not all targets

The Lead Member Councillor Wharton added that the LAA targets and progress were reported to the Executive on quarterly basis.

RESOLVED:

That the the process for further negotiation and finalisation of the LAA report be noted.

**6. Improving Outcomes for Black African and Black Caribbean Children and Young People Update Report**

The Committee considered a progress report on the recommendations made by the Improving Outcomes task Group established by the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee to review the Council's work in improving the educational, economic, social and health outcomes of Black African and Black Caribbean children and young people.

The Project Consultant, Mark Ainsworth updated the Committee on the key educational, inclusion, social health indicators since the original Scrutiny Review report was produced. He informed the Committee that there had been an improvement in the relative decline in educational

attainment from Key Stage 1 (7) to Key Stage 2 (11) for Black Caribbean, Black African, and, more specifically, Somali pupils. These pupils were now progressing on average at least as well as or better than Brent borough averages. In addition, the percentage of Black Caribbean boys achieving 5 A\*-Cs at GCSE improved from 30% in 2005/06 to 45% in 2006/07. However, the percentage of Black Caribbean boys achieving 5 A\*-Cs at GCSE including English and Maths is 26% compared to the overall borough average of 50% of pupils, and the figure is even lower for Somali boys; only 13% achieving 5 A\*-Cs including English and Maths. Additionally, Black Caribbean children and young people were less over-represented on many inclusion and social indicators, such as teenage pregnancy, fixed term exclusions, employment and training, child protection register and Children Looked After.

He outlined the key changes and priorities being implemented by the Council to address the situation through the voluntary sector and schools. These included community and voluntary sector grants programme, the implementation of the Good Practice Knowledge Base for Community and Voluntary sector projects, a major consultation exercise with black pupils and parents and support for schools with dedicated and specialist resource deployed through Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS).

Mr Roberts speaking on behalf of the teacher representatives stated there were more strategic social problems in the South of the Borough which needed to be addressed and with that in mind, he suggested that adequate provision for resources be made for the area in order to balance out the inequalities.

In response to a request by Councillor Arnold for statistics of children who were going out of the borough, which schools they were attending and the level of support they received from the schools, Mark Ainsworth stated that in partnership with the Connexions Service, measures to review and improve outcomes had been put in place. Although no clear picture had emerged but with the establishment of a London wide Connexions Service the Department would be able to expand on the improvement, review and analyse data available.

The Deputy Director of Children & Families, Rik Boxer added that greater targeting in accordance with needs, voluntary sector input and the allocation of grants were significant factors in seeking to improve the outcomes of Black African and Black Caribbean Children and Young People. The Chair noted that the extended school provision had been appreciated by the Somali groups and added that further progress report be submitted to a future of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

that the report together with the key areas for priority action in the next 12 months discussed above, be noted.

**7. Annual Educational Standards 2006/07**

The Committee considered a report which outlined key trends and analysis in educational standards at the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Brent in 2007.

Faira Ellks Head of School Improvement introduced this report. She informed the Committee that Brent's standards were well below the national average in the Foundation Stage, below average at Key Stage 1, at or somewhat below at Key Stages 2 and 3, and above average at Key Stage 4. At each key stage, girls tended to achieve more highly than boys, especially in English, and to make better progress. Pupils entitled to free school meals lagged behind other pupils: the gap was apparent at age five, and widened at each key stage. There were significant variations in the attainment and progress of different ethnic groups, with some differences from one key stage to another.

Generally, pupils make progress in their learning between the key stages which is above the rate of progress made by pupils nationally. The percentage of pupils making two or more levels of progress between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 was above the national average in English and just above in mathematics. Progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3 was above average in all core subjects. Similarly, progress was good between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4: Brent is in the top 40% of LAs nationally.

In summarising the conclusions for Key Stage 1, Faira Ellks said the general picture was that Brent's figures were about 4% below national averages. It was noted that girls did better than boys in all ethnic groups with Asian Indian and Whites attaining the highest. The achievement of pupils entitled to free school meals, Black African particularly Somali pupils and Pakistani boys was lower in all subjects.

In respect of Key Stage 2, Brent's results went up in all three subjects by one or two percentage points, with English remaining the same as the national average but two percentage points and four percentage points below average in mathematics and science respectively. Here again, girls continued to achieve much higher results than boys except in mathematics where they outperformed girls. She continued that Brent's performance in Key Stage 3 was one to two percentage points below the national averages, compared to a period from 2004 to 2006 when Brent's results were near or at



national averages in English and mathematics. It was noted that once again girls continued to perform better than boys in English and science, with the gender gap most apparent in English. Once again, pupils entitled to free school meals achieved much less well than other pupils in all three subjects while the results of Asian Pakistani, Black African, Black Caribbean and White Other pupils were below average. Asian Indian pupils performed consistently well above the borough average. The Committee also noted that Key Stage 4 results continued to rise with Brent achieving over four percentage points above the national average for five or more A\*-C grades (any subject) and almost five percentage points above average for five or more A\*-C grades including English and mathematics. The general picture of gender achievement, below average achievement of pupils on free school meals and Black African and Black Caribbean pupils were noted.

In welcoming the report, Councillor Arnold enquired as to whether there were specific factors that could explain the below average achievement of children on free school meals, tracking them to the nursery school ages. She expressed a wish to know how many of those children progressed to 6<sup>th</sup> form schools and colleges and other destinations. In responding to these, Faira Ellks stated that the complex picture in the transition stage coupled with lack of continuity of support as schools were unable to provide wrap around service to the children were some of the reasons for the below average achievement. She added that currently there were strong arrangements in place to support children in special educational needs and that future audit reports would cover the destinations of those pupils. The Chair congratulated the teachers in the Borough for the educational progress made.

#### **8. Local Government & Public Involvement in Health – Briefing**

The Committee received a briefing report on the Local Government & Public Involvement Health Act 2007 (LGPIH) that covered a wide variety of issues relating to local government with direct impact on overview & scrutiny.

In presenting the report, Stella Akintan of Policy & Regeneration Unit stated that the aim of the provisions contained within the LGPIH was to strengthen the powers of overview and scrutiny in a number of ways. These included powers to councillors to place items on the agendas of overview & scrutiny committees, powers to require the Executive to respond to overview and scrutiny and also powers to require external partners to supply information to overview and scrutiny. Stella Akintan undertook to look into the practical implications of this briefing and report back to the committee at a future meeting.

**RESOLVED:**

that the progress made to date be noted.

9. **Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee would take place on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2008 subject to confirmation at the Council meeting in May 2008.

10. **Future agenda items**

It was requested that the report updating the Committee on Youth Needs in Kilburn and highlighting the effectiveness of the scrutiny process be presented to a future meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee for information.

The meeting ended at 9.45pm

W MOTLEY  
Chair