



MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 20 October 2010 at 7.00 pm

PRESENT: Councillor Gladbaum (Chair), Councillor Matthews (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Aden, Harrison, Hunter and Oladapo, Mr Lorenzato (Statutory Co-optee), Dr Levison (Non-statutory Co-optee), Ms J Cooper (Teachers' Panel) and Mrs L Gouldbourne (Teachers' Panel)

Also present: Councillor Arnold (Lead Member, Children and Families), Kishan Parshotam (UK Youth Parliament Member for Brent) and Rizwaan Malik (UK Youth Parliament Member for Brent)

Apologies were received from: Councillors Hector and Kumar, Mrs Tabi (Non-statutory Co-optee) and Ms C Jolinon (Teachers' Panel)

1. Declarations of personal and prejudicial interests

None declared.

2. Terms of reference

The Chair pointed out that the wrong terms of reference had been included with the agenda for this meeting, and she drew members' attention to the correct terms of reference which were circulated.

3. Minutes of the last meeting of the Children & Families Overview & Scrutiny Committee

RESOLVED:

that the minutes of the last meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 July 2010 be approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

4. Matters arising (if any)

None.

5. Deputations (if any)

None received.

6. Brent Youth Parliament Media Summit report

Councillor Arnold (Lead Member, Children and Families) introduced the report already circulated, entitled "Outcomes of the Brent Youth Parliament (BYP) Media

Summit, 'Break the Stereotype, Fix the Impression'. She explained that she had attended the summit which had been held in August 2010 and had been impressed by its outcomes.

Rizwaan Malik (UK Youth Parliament Member for Brent) then explained that BYP had hosted a youth conference which had brought local and national decision makers together with the borough's young people. This had been followed by the "Break the Stereotype, Fix the Impression" survey which had received some 2,242 responses from people of all ages across the country. Over 50 per cent of respondents had stated that they thought that the media did not show young people in a fair light.

Kishan Parshotam explained that, on 12 August 2010, BYP had held its first-ever media summit. He had chaired a panel of specially-invited guests which had included Matt Gardner (Brent Borough Police Commander), Sarah Teather MP (Minister of State for Children and Families) and Andy McCorkell (News Editor, Willesden and Brent Times). Kishan Parshotam explained that he had been surprised at the willingness of the invited guests to make pledges to move the campaign forward: Mr Gardner had committed to inviting BYP members to join the local "stop and search" forum, Ms Teather had agreed to bring this to the attention of the Home Secretary as an initiative which could be rolled out nationally, and Mr McCorkell had agreed to give BYP members a monthly column in the newspaper.

Kishan Parshotam then described further outcomes of the media summit, which included major coverage of the event in the television and print media; liaison with the Willesden and Brent Times which had resulted in a dedicated BYP page on the newspaper's website; and a meeting with the Brent Borough Commander to arrange BYP representatives' participation in the "stop and search" forum.

The Chair asked whether BYP representatives had met again with Sarah Teather MP. Kishan Parshotam replied that she had not yet been in touch but that it was hoped that liaison with her office could be re-established after the new BYP met for the first time in January 2011.

Dr Levinson (Jewish Faith Co-optee) asked whether the funding for BYP would be maintained after the financial cuts announced in the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review would be implemented. Kishan Parshotam replied that BYP had one of the lowest budgets of all borough youth committees in London, and yet had managed to achieve some of the most high-profile results. Councillor Arnold added that she anticipated that funding of the BYP would continue.

The Vice-Chair commended the BYP for the hard work which had gone into the media summit, and the Chair then thanked the two BYP representatives and Renata Chavda for their contribution to the meeting.

RESOLVED:

that the contents of the report, "Outcomes of the Brent Youth parliament Media Summit 'Break the Stereotype, Fix the Impression'" be noted.

7. Youth Service Review

The Committee received the report, "Review of Youth Service provision," which had been previously circulated. Angela Chiswell (Head of Youth and Connexions Service) explained that the report covered not only the Council's dedicated Youth Service but also general services for youth provided by various Council departments.

Angela Chiswell reported that the specific objectives of the review were to make recommendations on future service development, more effective co-ordination of services, development of a future "local youth offer", and a re-focusing of the priorities and objectives for the Youth Service.

Angela Chiswell went on to explain that the recommendations arising from the review had included the establishment of a steering group to take a strategic view of youth service provision; the publication of a comprehensive list of the services offered for young people; the setting of measurable targets for all services provided to youth in the borough; and a joining together of commissioning functions which are currently scattered across various departments.

Councillor Harrison asked whether there was a timescale for the implementation of the review recommendations. Angela Chiswell replied that it was planned that the majority of the recommendations would have been implemented by the end of 2011.

Ms J Cooper (Teachers' Panel) asked whether a new swimming pool in the north of the borough would be included as part of the audit of service provision to youth. Councillor Arnold replied that the Executive would act on the information that had come out of the review, while Councillor Matthews explained that a new swimming pool for the north of the borough remained an aspiration.

Mrs Gouldbourne (Teachers' Panel) asked whether disabled students were making use of the borough's youth services. Angela Chiswell replied that a database of youth services across West London was currently being compiled, which would enable the Council to ascertain more clearly who was accessing them.

Councillor Matthews asked whether there was any scope to involve young people in the steering group. Angela Chiswell replied that it was a key principle of the Youth and Connexions Services to engage young people in its planning. The Chair explained that she and the Committee would welcome this being included in the Services' statement of aims. The Committee also felt it would be appropriate if disabled young people were members of the steering group and this was recommended to officers.

In response to questions, Angela Chiswell explained that the Youth Service was expecting an extra £250,000 cut in its funding. The Chair commented that rationalising of activities would be vital in the current atmosphere of funding reduction, and it was agreed that an update would be provided to the Committee either in February or March 2011.

RESOLVED:

that the contents of the report, "Review of Youth Service provision", be noted.

8. Localities Teams update report

Members received the report, "Update on the work of Early Intervention Teams and Social Care team working in localities. Jo Brider (Early Intervention Localities Manager) explained that the Early Intervention Team (EIT) was a non-statutory team which, since April 2010, had been co-located with Social Services in five localities around the borough. She explained that the EIT worked in partnership with families, advocating on behalf of children and young people. She added that the main benefit of the close working relationship between the EIT and social workers was that families in need could be referred to social work teams quickly when required.

Sharon Stockman (Head, Social Care Localities Teams) then explained that schools in particular benefited from having a single place where they could refer children whom they suspected of needing social care intervention. She went on to explain that the EIT and locality social work teams met every six weeks with a number of other agencies to help foster closer working relationships with each other.

Councillor Hunter explained that the Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee had recently endorsed a letter written to the Primary Care Trust (PCT) by the Chief Executive, expressing concerns about the PCT's plans for Brent Community Services. She asked whether the localities teams had been consulted for their feedback. Sharon Stockman replied that a meeting of the Localities Safeguarding Board had recently discussed the plans and the Chief Executive's response, although neither the social work localities teams nor the EIT had been asked for their feedback. Graham Genoni (Assistant Director, Social Care) added that the Council had been consulted only recently, and that the decision making had now moved on to the strategic health authority and away from the Council. Andrew Davies (Policy Officer, Policy and Regeneration) explained that members would be kept informed of developments through the Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee and this Committee.

Councillor Hunter explained that the Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee had asked the PCT to re-visit the matter in the light of the concerns expressed in the Chief Executive's letter. Councillor Arnold (Lead Member, Children and Families) explained that the Executive would make the case for further consideration of the proposals through the Chief Executive.

RESOLVED:

that the contents of the report, "Update on the work of Early Intervention Team and Social Care team working in Localities" be noted.

9. School results - verbal update

In response to a request from members at the last meeting of the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Faira Elks (Head of School

Improvement) and Chris Rossiter (Schools Improvement Adviser, Maths and Numeracy) gave a short verbal update on Brent school results based on preliminary data from the academic year 2009-10.

Faira Elks explained that, as a general picture, school results started at a low level but improved across all Key Stages. Preliminary data suggested that, at Early Years Foundation Stage, 43 per cent of Brent schoolchildren achieved the requisite level in all areas of learning, which was lower than the averages for Greater London and England and Wales, although the gap between the highest achieving and lowest achieving children was narrowing. She added that, in order to find out why Brent results in this age group were so low, a Quality and Improvement Team was now in place to monitor these results.

Chris Rossiter explained that, at Key Stage 1, results remained lower than the Greater London and national average, although this gap had narrowed in recent years. She advised that the gap between children who received and who did not receive free school meals was, however, narrower than in other boroughs.

Chris Rossiter then explained that, at Key Stage 2, the results were better. Considering the relatively low levels at Key Stage 1, Brent schoolchildren made accelerated progress and the preliminary data suggested that, for the first time, the results for English and mathematics were above the national average.

Faira Elks then explained that, for Key Stage 3, it was difficult to glean an accurate picture from the preliminary data, although the figures suggested that Brent schools were performing below the national average in English and mathematics. The picture was, however, brighter for Key Stage 4 where 61.3 per cent of Brent schoolchildren had achieved at least five A*-C passes at GCSE level.

The Chair asked that the Committee's congratulations be passed on to the Headteachers of Brent's schools to thank them for their hard work and for the improvements in results.

RESOLVED:

that the information contained in the verbal update be noted.

10. **Support for Somali pupils**

Naureen Kausar (Head of Service, Ethnic Minorities and Travellers Achievement Service) introduced the report, "Support for Somali pupils", which had been circulated. She explained that, although the school performance of Brent's Somali pupils had improved in recent years, there was continuing underperformance amongst this group.

Naureen Kausar described in some detail the support offered in schools to Somali students, which included: language development; an effective induction programme; and involvement of students' parents in the educational performance of their children. She added that the Ethnic Minorities and Travellers Achievement Service (EMTAS) had also arranged regular appearances on a Somali-language television channel to explain the British education system to Somali parents.

Members welcomed the efforts made by the EMTAS to improve school performance among Somali pupils and the improvements which had been made.

RESOLVED:

that the contents of the report, "Support for Somali pupils," be noted.

11. Youth Offending Task Group - terms of reference

Members considered the Terms of Reference for the Youth Offending Task Force which had been circulated.

The Chair explained that she would like to act as chair of this Task Group, which proposal was accepted. She then asked for volunteers to become members of the Task Group. Councillor Hector and Councillor Harrison both offered to act in this role.

RESOLVED:

that Councillor Gladbaum be elected to act as the Chair of the Youth Offending Task Group; and

that Councillor Hector and Councillor Harrison be elected to act as members of the Youth Offending Task Group.

12. Verbal update - school places in Brent

Graham Genoni (Assistant Director, Social Care) gave a brief update on the situation regarding school places in Brent. He explained that there was a shortage of about 150 school places at reception class age, although primary schools, Children's Centres and nurseries were working together to provide short-term solutions to address this shortage. Councillor Arnold (Lead Member, Children and Families) added that there was a higher level of shortage of reception class places than had been anticipated, although from January, around 135 extra school places would be available.

Graham Genoni went on to say that, at secondary school level, there was currently a surplus of school places, now that the Ark Academy had been launched.

RESOLVED:

that the information contained in the verbal update on school places be noted.

13. Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee work programme 2010-11

Members considered a table of suggested items for future meetings of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee which had been circulated.

Andrew Davies (Policy Officer, Policy and Regeneration) explained that the meeting scheduled in February 2011 would consider items on the subject of social care. The Chair asked whether an item on the safety of schoolchildren on the way to and from

school could be brought before the Committee; Andrew Davies replied that this could be heard at the Committee's December meeting.

Mrs Gouldbourne (Teachers' Panel) asked when the Youth Offending Task Force would report back to the Committee. Andrew Davies replied that it would be arranged for feedback to be given to the Committee at its meeting scheduled for March 2011. Mrs Gouldbourne then asked whether a report on children's health could be brought before the Committee. Andrew Davies replied that this was a subject that would normally be considered by the Health Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee, but that he would circulate a report on sexual health which had recently been considered by that committee.

Councillor Hector asked how often the One Communities, Many Voices event would be held. Andrew Davies explained that the event held in September 2010 had been the first of its kind, and he agreed to explore whether this could be made into a regular event.

RESOLVED:

that the work programme for future meetings of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

14. Date of next meeting

Members heard that the next meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee was scheduled for 8 December 2010. Mrs Gouldbourne (Teachers' Panel) noted this clashed with the Schools Forum meeting. Andrew Davies undertook to see whether this meeting could be re-scheduled to avoid this clash.

15. Any other urgent business

None.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm

H. GLADBAUM
Chair