

Corporate Parenting Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Corporate Parenting Committee held on Thursday 21 April 2011 at 5.00 pm at Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT: Councillor Catherine McDonald (Chair)
Councillor Patrick Diamond
Councillor Claire Hickson
Councillor Althea Smith
Barbara Hills (non-voting coopted member)

OFFICER SUPPORT: Chris Saunders (head of looked after children service), Alasdair Smith, Darren Coghlan, (children's services), John Howard (head of organisational development), Paula Thornton and Bola Roberts (constitutional team).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Eliza Mann.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

The members listed as present were confirmed as the voting members for the meeting.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were no urgent items.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the open minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2011 were agreed as a

correct record and signed by the Chair.

6. ECONOMIC WELLBEING OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

RESOLVED:

1. That the number and variety of interventions available to support looked after children and care leavers to achieve economic well being be noted. These interventions include:
 - The council's apprenticeship scheme
 - Support from a dedicated Connexions and Southwark Works officers
 - Coaching scheme
 - Drop in service for looked after children.
2. That the strong partnerships in place, with a soon to be refreshed multiagency looked after children (Not in Education, Employment or Training) NEET Strategy Group that is exploring ways of providing joined up provision to this cohort of young people be noted.
3. That there is a comprehensive (Not in Education, Employment or Training) NEET strategy in place which is overseen by the multiagency group referred to above be noted.
4. That the success of the council's apprenticeship scheme with looked after children who are well represented and supported to access this programme be noted. That the committee be kept updated with regard to Southwark College courses and the preferential opportunities as and when developed for local employment (for example the Shard and other developments)
5. That access to higher education be monitored by the committee, including actions taken to lobby government (to raise relevant issues with regard to looked after children) in order to ensure that looked after children are not disproportionately affected by the recent changes in the university fees regime.

7. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN LEAVING CARE

RESOLVED:

1. That it be noted that (Southwark bankers) are to provide bank accounts for looked after children and support for children leaving care.
2. That an update report as to implementation and review of proposed revisions to the savings scheme (under 16's) be noted.
3. That the decisions made with Speakerbox Council relating to implementation of leaving care grant arrangements be noted.
4. That the chair to write to the cabinet member for finance, resources and community

safety to inform him of the bank accounts initiative and calling on him to explore other ways in which the council can engage with other banks/companies to further the council's policy objectives.

5. That St. Mungos to be included in the consultation with regard to the possible utilisation of discounted furniture for children leaving care.

8. ESTABLISHMENT OF THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

RESOLVED:

1. That the virtual school proposals and the outcome of the staff consultation process be noted.
2. That the proposal to explore opportunities for formal joint working with looked after children (LAC) teams in neighbouring boroughs, including Lambeth and Lewisham be endorsed, and stronger partnerships be developed with local authorities that are further afield such as Kent, given that a significant proportion of Southwark LAC are in schools in other local authorities. The committee also requested that looked after children are kept fully informed of any such proposals.
3. That the virtual school head commission much of the school's work from staff with specific expertise in other services including special educational needs (SEN), early years, school improvement, admissions, 14-19 and Connexions to help formalise their responsibility as corporate parents. It may also be appropriate to commission work from external organisations.

9. ECONOMIC WELL BEING - UNACCOMPANIED MINORS

RESOLVED:

1. That the continued provision of a specialist unaccompanied minors over the last seven years be approved.
2. That the considerable expertise of the unaccompanied minors team being utilised by other parts of children's services responsible for supporting families with no recourse to public funds or where children have been subject to trafficking be supported.
3. That the head of services for children in care and the principle lawyer for children's service report back on the feasibility and practicalities of the reference of minors to other boroughs legal teams (to utilise legal experience from other authorities on an independent basis).

10. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT AND PROPOSED REPORTING FORMAT

RESOLVED:

1. That the proposed annual schedule for reporting performance outcomes for children in

care and care leavers be agreed.

2. That interim end of year performance outcomes pending full report under schedule agreed for recommendation 1 be noted.
3. That the enjoy and achieve committee meeting (including annual report from virtual head teacher) will coincide with mid year performance review (November) be noted.
4. That the committee receive 'on an exception basis' report/s of any significant variations evident from the monthly review of looked after children/care leavers.

11. ANNUAL ADOPTION AND FOSTERING SERVICES REPORT

RESOLVED:

1. That the annual report provided on the adoption & fostering Service for the period 1 April 2009-31 March 2010 be noted.
2. That the statements of purpose in regard to the adoption and fostering services which are at the present time being fundamentally revised to reflect changes in the regulations, best practice developments and also the restructure of the services that are being put in place on 1 April 2011 be noted. It is anticipated that the revised statements of purpose will be presented as background papers to the next meeting of the corporate parenting committee.

12. ADOLESCENT AND AFTER CARE SERVICES

RESOLVED:

1. That the annual report relating to the delivery of the adolescent and aftercare service for looked after children and care leavers (13-21) be received.
2. That in the event of planning permission being granted the current plan to locate the children looked after service in a single central location in Peckham from November 2011 (from its current three separate locations) be endorsed.
3. That the delivery of key partnerships/protocols with other council services to target looked after children and care leavers to deliver tangible outcomes be continued to be supported and scrutinised by the committee.

13. CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE WORK PLAN 2010-11

RESOLVED:

That the work plan for 2010/11 as set out in paragraph 5 of the report of the report be noted.

In considering the workplan, the committee requested:

- Speakerbox to be invited to the next meeting
- That the invite for the 'celebration ceremony' in October 2011 be sent out as soon as possible to ensure in members diaries

The meeting finished at 6.33pm

CHAIR:

DATED: