

## Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 24 March 2015 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G01C - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

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**PRESENT:** Councillor Jasmine Ali (Chair)  
Councillor Evelyn Akoto  
Councillor Anne Kirby  
Councillor James Okosun  
Councillor Kath Whittam  
George Ogbonna

**OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT:** Councillor Ian Wingfield; Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Employment & Business

**OFFICER SUPPORT:** Michael O'Connor, Safeguarding Independent Chair.  
David Quirke-Thornton, Strategic Director of Children's and Adults Services.  
Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Services  
Kerry Crichlow, Director Strategy & Commissioning  
Danny Edwards, Strategy & Partnerships Manager (Local Economy)  
Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny project manager

### 1. APOLOGIES

1.1 There were apologies for absence from Councillors Anne Kirby & Kieron Williams and Martin Brecknell. Councillor Catherine Dale attended as a substitute.

### 1. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

2.1 There were no urgent items of business.

## 1. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

3.1 Cllr Kath Whittam announced her daughter used Children's Services.

## 1. MINUTES

### RESOLVED:

The decisions of the meeting held on 23 February 2015 were agreed as a correct record.

## 1. CABINET MEMBER INTERVIEW - DEPUTY LEADER COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD

5.1 The chair welcomed Councillor Ian Wingfield; Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Communities, Employment & Business, for his annual interview. Members of the committee chose six themes to structure the interview around:

### I. Employment and apprenticeships opportunities for young people in Southwark

- How are apprenticeships procured?
- The evolution of the Apprenticeships quality standard and what else can we expect for workplace learning.
- How do people with SEND fit into the new apprenticeship scheme and how are the new EHC plans linking in with the scheme, especially supported apprenticeships and traineeships.

### II. Quality of Careers advice

- What is the current quality of careers advice?
- How are the links between education and employment made – how joined up are we? What are the gaps?

### III. Zero Hours Contacts & London Living Wage in Southwark

- How can we ensure that nobody employed, either directly or indirectly, by the Borough is on a zero hours contract and that all employees are paid the London Living Wage? Including those employed in maintained schools, colleges and educational institutions, social services etc.

### IV. Encouraging, supporting and funding initiatives that encourage interfaith dialogue and harmony

## **V. Herne Hill and the impact of flooding**

- What is Southwark proposing to do to ensure Thames Water contribute a fairer amount to the severely damaged Herne Hill area than the current offer of £100,000?
- Can the council help to prevent further closures of shops in Herne Hill due to the damage done by the Thames Water floods as in the last few months 2 traders have closed with one still not re-opened with the loss of a considerable number of jobs?

## **VI. Sustainable development**

- What is the Council's policy to ensure that landlords understand the value and long term benefits of a balanced and mixed business economy in the high street and not to let their premises be used for unsuitable business uses, such as betting shops, excessive numbers of estate agents or national chains?
- Will the council ensure that landlords that do not operate in the long term interests of the local community do not in any way benefit from public money or council procurement?
- How will local neighbourhood plans and policies tackle town centre renewal and regeneration in a sustainable way?
- What funding is available for businesses on the whole to help generate jobs and growth?

5.2 The Cabinet member was asked about the first theme and in particular Lewisham Southwark Colleges under-performance, and delivery of the council's commitment to deliver 2000 apprenticeships. He responded that not everybody will follow an academic route so the council do need to be proactive on apprenticeships and vocational courses. The council need to be prepared to be more proactive in promoting vocational courses and apprenticeships to local 6th forms and also encouraging links between business and colleges.

5.3 He explained that 200 apprenticeships have been created so far, 1/10 of the target. Southwark Works is the council principal delivery agent. He went to one event and met an autistic young man who was enabled to find a job as a tour guide as he was able to give chapter and verse on a cathedral history - which demonstrates there is a place for everyone somewhere. He also recently went to the Tate for an awards ceremony and heard about the successes including the council's role supported apprenticeship. The council has secured additional money to develop this programme with shared services. He explained that the council also have excellent

relationships with business, who are taking on apprentices through their corporate responsibilities.

- 5.4 A member of the committee commented that the apprenticeships Quality Standard is very important and asked if the council will take an evolutionary approach to raising standards? The cabinet member assured him that the council would. He commented that the council set up the Apprenticeship Quality Standard because feedback was so variable, with the quality being described as good in some cases and deplorable in others - with people making the tea. He explained that the Apprenticeship Quality Standards include paying the London Living Wage, a contract of 12 months, delivery with a fully accredited training provider and access to learning mentors. He said we have a vibrant construction industry and the council want people to make the most of this, and the range of opportunity available. The council need to celebrate those who have met the standard and also encourage other employers to raise their game.
- 5.5 A member commented that she was encouraged that young disabled people can access apprenticeships at Southwark, but asked about pre-apprenticeships and traineeships. The cabinet member said that the council is supporting the development of these. She then went on to ask about provision for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). He explained that the council require that employers provide the right support and when making placement. Danny Edwards, Strategy & Partnerships Manager (Local Economy), explained that there is a SEED programme that provides additional funding for people with SEND or who are disadvantaged.
- 5.6 A member asked about the current quality of careers advice. The cabinet lead responded that he is not the absolute expert on this as lead responsibility for careers advice lies with the Children's cabinet lead, however, he reported, the feedback he gets is that advice is variable. He added that Southwark Business Alliance is very pro active, and most schools are willing to work in partnership, but others are less so which is puzzling. He said the council do have a duty to ensure that young people do gain the right skills. This is linked to the guarantee that each young person will get a job, apprenticeship, traineeship or access further education, and the council do work in partnership with employers and schools to deliver this.
- 5.7 A member asked how linked up the council was with local business and he explained that he does still come across businesses that are not aware of the council's apprenticeship programme and work with the local economy. The council are setting up forums to involve business, including the major providers. He added that some businesses are saying that careers advice should start in primary school. He said that at a recent meeting with a Spanish business, he was struck that Southwark are a beacon, particularly for diversity. The borough has over 200 languages spoken. About 50 % do

not have English as a first language, so there is also an advantage that of extra languages

- 5.8 The deputy leader was then asked about the Living Wage. He said that the Southwark is a Living Wage council and we encourage our contractors otherwise they do not get the work. He added that council representatives are also promoting this in various forums so the council are very much at the forefront on this.
- 5.9 He was then asked about sustainable development and remarked that this is very much left to the market. He took the Mayor of London on a tour to Peckham and someone asked about the saturation of bookmakers. Formally the council has little power on this; however we do now have a planning policy whereby the council have set a saturation limit of 5%. The council also have some legal redress about change of use.
- 5.10 He added that affordable housing is again market led, and there is some housing deemed affordable but is actually beyond my reach. He said it is also unfortunate that developers land bank and do not develop, sometimes going through rounds of applications but not taking any forward.
- 5.11 The deputy leader was asked to comment on FGM and work done with the faith communities. He said that his deputy Cllr Mohammad has been very proactive in going out into faith communities. He added that the council recently held an open day and launched a faith covenant which was about working in partnership, as there is a range of community initiatives on youth and pastoral work and the council want to ensue that services are linked up. There was also a recent Peace breakfast that brings the faith community together. The chair commented that FGM was the committees work programme and will be returned to next year.

## **1. INDEPENDENT SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD CHAIR**

- 6.1 The chair welcomed the Independent Safeguarding chair , Michael O'Connor, the Strategic Director of Children's and Adults Services, Children's and Adults' Services, David Quirke –Thornton and the Director of Children's Services, Rory Patterson
- 6.2 A film, produced by council, on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) was shown. Members asked how effective it was. Officers said they commissioned it as often CSE is about quite subtle sexually exploitative peer relationships. Officers said it was important to have a dialogue about relationships early, and by year 5, as by the time young people reached secondary school they had already made decisions about what was acceptable in relationships.

The film allows delicate conversations.

- 6.3 Members asked if the film was shown to mixed audiences. Officers said both sexes; boys can be groomed too. Officers were also asked if parents were shown the film and the Independent Chair said they were not but this is an avenue that could be looked into. The Director of Children's Services said that the council is trailing a campaign and that will target parents.
- 6.4 The Independent Chair was asked about recent legislation that will send officers to prison for failures to protect children. He responded that people were drawn to safeguarding work to protect young people and he viewed the recent announcement with an element of cynicism about gesture politics.
- 6.5 Members asked about work with schools, Police and the voluntary and community sector. The Independent Chair responded that the board is strengthening its work through partnerships, particularly on CSE and Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), but also our core work on child protection. The board are developing self evaluation tools, particularly on Looked After Children and issues arising from this work. He explained that partners have been looking at holding each other to account and using the Ofsted framework to do this. He explained that the Metropolitan Police have reduced resources to devote to tackling CSE, and this is ironic as at the same time the prime minister is talking about Child Protection gearing up to address this issue there is a reduction in capacity. The Independent Chair commented that police have an important role in tackling CSE as the partnership need to have the intelligence to identify if they are working with the same children. The Police and Board also now have the Prevent agenda which is an additional responsibility.
- 6.6 Cllr Ali, the committee chair, commented that we pushed you for the minutes to get transparency on the board's work. The independent Chair responded that the delay in sending them was to let partners know this was the intention, as they had not been written with publication in mind. He explained that going forward minutes will be produced that are fit for the purpose of being published on the website.
- 6.7 The Independent Chair was asked about partnership, particularly with the police, and he said there is a strong one. Police on the ground are good, however there are issues about sharing data as this is collected and held centrally – the partnership board are working to overcome this. A member remarked that her observation is that the transition from a Safer Neighbourhood model to local policing has meant that all the local knowledge has gone and now the police are more reactive. The

Independent Chair commented that he is now not working at a local level and so was unable to comment, but he did have more awareness of how the police investigate CSE, however he said that this observation is concerning and he will raise this as local intelligence is very important as to uncovering exploitation.

- 6.8 The Independent Chair was asked if the Board have enough powers. He responded that he is able to have conversations at a very senior level. The board have a small team, so there is not a huge infrastructure for more power. He commented that he was unsure if the board needs more power and said that anyway he prefers to work through influence.
- 6.9 A member asked the Independent Chair if he could say more about management reviews and what these have exposed. He responded that one issue is missing children and the need to re-interview. Missing children are a strand of CSE. They are generally looking at the complexities of adolescence and vulnerabilities.
- 6.10 The Independent Chair was asked to talk about the launch of the new publicity programme on CSE. He said the programme is targeting a wide range of people - such as mini cabs, parents, and young people, and using a variety of images.

## **RESOLVED**

The committee asked to talk to the young people's board.

### **1. REVIEW: ADOPTION**

The draft report was discussed.

## **RESOLVED**

The present recommendations will be formulated into an Adoption Charter, with additional recommendations on education and adopted children.

### **1. REVIEW: NARROWING THE ATTAINMENT GAP REPORT**

The draft report was discussed and agreed.

## **RESOLVED**

CAMHS commissioners will be invited to the Policy Seminar in order to feed into

the recommendations on mental health & wellbeing.

**1. REVIEW: FREE HEALTHY SCHOOL MEALS**

Councillor Kieron Williams gave his apologies for this item.

**1. MINI REVIEW - AUTISM UPDATE**

Cllr Kath Whittam and the Cllr Jasmine Ali reported that they had recently met with Jay Stickland, Director of Adult Social Care and Peta Smith, Commissioning Manager, and they had said that they have done a mapping exercise to inform the Autism Strategy, but the strategy is clearly still in the early stages of development. Officers said this was because they had wanted to ensure the strategy went wider than the original remit of children – now it encompasses adult and people with mild autism. Cllr Kath Whittam reported that the mapping exercise did reveal that out of 1500 assessments of children 60% are autistic. She said this illustrates the scale of need and it is absolutely vital to get a strategy going.

**RESOLVED**

The sub-committee will recommend that the Autism strategy stays on the work-plan for next administrative year.

**1. POLICY SEMINAR**

Chair raised the Policy Seminar and explained its role and encouraged people to come .