

EDUCATION, CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND LEISURE SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Education, Children's Services and Leisure Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 26 November 2013 at 7.00 pm at Ground Floor Meeting Room G02A - 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor David Hubber (Chair)
Councillor The Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Chris Brown
Councillor Rosie Shimell
Councillor Cleo Soanes
Lynn Charlton
Councillor Chopra

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Veronica Ward, Cabinet Member for culture, leisure, sport and volunteering.

OFFICER SUPPORT: Deborah Collins, Strategic Director of Environment
Merril Haeusler, Director of Children's Services – Education
Kerry Crichlow, Director Strategy & Commissioning
Ron St Louis, Early Help team leader
Julie Timbrell, Project manager

1. APOLOGIES

- 1.1 Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Smith and Rajan. Councillor Chopra attended as a substitute.

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

- 2.1 There were none.

3. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

- 3.1 Councillor The Right Reverend Emmanuel Oyewole announced that he would be withdrawing from the interview of the cabinet lead for all questions that related to his portfolio as Deputy Cabinet Member for Southwark's Faith Communities.

4. MINUTES

- 4.1 The minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2013 were agreed as a correct record

5. ANNUAL INTERVIEW WITH THE CABINET MEMBER FOR CULTURE, LEISURE, SPORT, AND VOLUNTEERING

- 5.1 The chair welcomed Councillor Veronica Ward, Cabinet Member for culture, leisure, sport and volunteering. He thanked her for the tabled written answers and suggested these be appended to the minutes.
- 5.2 He then invited the cabinet lead to give an overview of her portfolio and Councillor Ward began by noting the high satisfaction rate recorded among residents with libraries and leisure centers. She reported that Dulwich and Camberwell Leisure Centers have both been refurbished and major investment is scheduled for Peckham Pulse. Canada Water Library has been a huge success with 20 percent of all users, and up to a million users by the New Year.
- 5.3 The cabinet member spoke about the very successful events - such as the reading challenge and a successful film event with a youth panel. The council supports well over 100 events and these range from carnival events to firework displays and local festivals such as the Elephant and the Nun.
- 5.4 She emphasized the importance of the Sport and Physical Activity Strategy, which is tackling inactivity, particularly targeting people with disabilities and obesity.
- 5.5 She highlighted that Southwark came 9th in the Youth Games and there is a very good Southwark Youth Panel.

- 5.6 The cabinet member spoke about the importance of Southwark as a cultural centre, and noted that the arts were a larger employer in the borough than the construction industry and there is a new arts plan to support this work.
- 5.7 The cabinet member gave a final mention to volunteers, and noted the importance of this strand of work and the council's contribution to the volunteer champion project.
- 5.8 A member asked if the long term vision for Newington will include a library and the cabinet member said that it would. She was then asked about the Camberwell Library plans and commented that this will be light and spacious, with a good children's library. A member commented that while there is a good local history library it is rather cramped and the Strategic Director, Deborah Collins, agreed but noted this is the space available, commenting that if the council were ever offered a better space then we would take it.
- 5.9 The head-teacher representative commented that Fusion have told schools that they will be charged to use leisure facilities after 4pm. She added she was unsure if this was throughout the borough, but it was certainly the case in the north, and this was contrary to the agreement with Sport England and Fusion, which gave an undertaking that schools could use the facilities for free up to 5pm. The cabinet member expressed surprise and assured the head-teacher representative that she would look into this.
- 5.10 A committee member asked the cabinet lead if she would put in a request for a budget increase for Black History Month celebrations. She responded that there is a budget process and indicated that the funding for Black History Month has remained the same for several years and that the council is going through a difficult funding process. She asked the member why more funding was needed and he responded that this is a popular event with demand from the community and she agreed that there was standing room only at many of the library events.
- 5.11 A member remarked on the success of the BMX track and asked who was using it. The cabinet member said that it was used by lots of groups, and the venue hosted regional events. She added that a break-down of figures is not easy to provide as the 'rock up and ride' events are quite informal.

She added it was the home of the Peckham BMX club, so the council knows it is used by local people.

- 5.12 The cabinet member was asked if the council gather data on residents who use the leisure centres and she responded that there will be a detailed report on this to cabinet shortly. She explained that a range of demographic information is kept, but not faith. There is also outreach and Fusion has promoted and target groups such as people with disabilities, women and girls. Fusion is part of the partnership that looks at increasing participation to promote wellbeing and ensure inclusion.
- 5.13 A member asked if there have been any increases or decreases in leisure access charges and the cabinet lead explained that these have stayed about the same ; charges are set by Fusion by the council oversee this. A member raised concerns about the level of fees and the impact on use and asked the cabinet lead what is being done to reach out to groups and ensure that the services are accessible. The cabinet member said that the data does not indicate that facilities are being used less. She commented that concessionary rates are very good, and down time fees are also lower. The member urged the cabinet lead to look at the impact of fees on disadvantaged groups, adding that residents had raised concerns with him, and the cabinet member agreed to look into this further.
- 5.14 The chair commented that the written answer provided indicated Seven Islands Leisure Centre would be used as a police base for Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks. He asked if the police might use a porto –cabin and the cabinet member said that that at this stage the council do not know what is needed, but she had heard informally that it is not a huge amount of space.
- 5.15 The chair asked how effective the promotion of water-sports at Seven Islands Leisure Centre has been and commented that there has been a change in the Sailability staff. The cabinet member commented that there was a big promotion and offered to provide figures.

RESOLVED

The cabinet member indicated she would look into the reported

difficulties schools in the north are having accessing Fusion leisure centers after 4pm without a charge.

Figures will be provided on use of water-sports and Sailability.

6. REVIEW - THE COUNCIL'S ROLE WITH MAINTAINED, ACADEMY AND FREE SCHOOLS

- 6.1 The chair welcomed Southwark secondary school representatives: Sophy Blakeway , Director of Education, and Kate Oliver, Projects Director, from ARK Schools academy chain (who sponsor The Globe, Walworth Academy and All Saints Academy); Mr John Martin, head-teacher, Bacon's College; Mr Tony Searle, head-teacher, Compass and Mr Mahon, deputy head, St Michael's Catholic College. It was explained that Mr John Martin was also attending in his capacity as chair of Southwark's Secondary Head-teachers Forum. Apologies were received from the head-teacher of Charter School, Mr Hicks, and the chief executive of Harris Federation academy chain, Sir Daniel Moynihan. The chair invited Merril Haeusler, Director of Education, to briefly present the paper circulated.
- 6.2 The chair commented that it was frequently remarked that the press have power without responsibility, whereas it seems the council have responsibility without power. He then invited the secondary school representatives to comment on the council's relationship with secondary schools. Ms Katie Oliver , project director, ARK responded that ARK feel the relationship should be very strong and commented that they thought that they were well supported with exclusions and in turn ARK considered that their schools took their fair share of managed moves. She added that the cohort of pupils in Southwark includes many complex and challenging students – and ARK has accessed funding to provide programmes such as Place2be. ARK added that the academy chain is looking to develop partner primary schools.
- 6.3 Mr John Martin head-teacher of Bacons College, and chair of the Secondary Head-teachers Forum, commented that he had worked in many places, and was pleasantly surprised at the warmth of welcome. He added that schools are increasingly realizing the moral imperative of engaging with

the council and he congratulated the council for being nimble on its feet in a difficult financial situation.

- 6.4 The chair asked the representatives and Director of Education what they thought of the proposal by government that there would be a regional board to oversee schools, comprised of head-teachers and chancellors. The Director of Education responded that she would need to hear the detail before coming to a conclusion. Mr John Martin voiced concerns that the proposals could be knee jerk reaction to problems; some schools are part of chains and some stand alone, however a few had abused their autonomy. He said that generally schools would not welcome another layer of bureaucracy.
- 6.5 The chair then turned to the data on fixed and permanent exclusions and inquired about the data sources and accuracy and asked representatives to comment on the variations across schools. Mr John Martin commented that there are some problems with the data from Department for Education as there is a significant time lag from their publication and the data provided in the annual school census. Southwark council has put in places measures so more up to data is available. He explained that exclusions benefit from a degree of moderation from Ron St Louis, who deals with exclusions at the council, but fixed term exclusion are used with more autonomy and are part of schools armory in managing behavior.
- 6.6 A member commented that she was surprised to see the scale of the variation. The Director of Education said that some schools offer a wider variety of intervention to reduce fixed terms exclusions, for example time out.
- 6.7 ARK representatives commented that the data on permanent and fixed term exclusions is not correct and they will be working with the council to get the data sharing protocols right, and also suggested that figures that gave a percentage of the roll would give a more accurate reflection of the scale of school exclusion, as some schools are much larger than others; The Globe is a very large school. Kate Oliver said that she thought the council would see a reduction in exclusions and that there are a variety of initiatives that have been started to promote inclusion, including a project funded by the GLA. She acknowledged that fixed term exclusions are part of the schools armory, but she said that ARK

Schools do want to keep children in school. The Director of Education said The Globe has a new head and she was impressed with the good work being undertaken.

- 6.8 St Michael's Catholic College deputy head Mr Mahon commented that his school have an inclusion method; the despised 3 hours Saturday detention. He added that his school also work with Ron St Louis on exclusions.
- 6.9 The chair commented that he looks forward to receiving more accurate figures and percentages of rolls. A member requested figures for the numbers of pupils in Pupil Referral Units (PRU) and excluded from primary schools. Ron St Louis explained that there are no permanent exclusions from primary school, however there are some fixed term exclusions.
- 6.10 A member commented that she has been looking at Harris Schools' exclusion data and noticed that it was quite high but appears to have gone down. She said that she would like more information on managed moves including the amount of time spent in PRU and how successfully pupils were re-integrated. Ron St Louis responded that at key stage three every effort is made to re-integrate to mainstream school provision, but at stage four there is an emphasis on a more vocational curriculum. One important output is the number progressing to college, and he reported that there are less NEET young people progressing from PRU than schools.
- 6.11 The member asked about the council policy on managed moves and the PRU. She asked if children tend to return to the same school from a PRU or a different school. Ron St Louis said it tends to be a different school; the council also does termly dual arrangements. A member asked about the schools' obligations to engage in managed moves and he explained that there is no statutory obligation - but this is a reciprocal arrangement so there is a vested interest in schools engaging. A member asked if all secondary school engage and he said that they did.
- 6.12 A member asked if children with a statement are harder to place. Ron St Louis said that a statement would follow, however no pupils had been permanently excluded with a statement for a number of years. Mr John Martin commented that there are two types of pupils who get excluded; those who gradually 'gain points on their license' and those who are

excluded because of a serious 'one off' incident. He explained that the 'one offs' are harder to manage. He added that schools pay close attention to children with statements and 'looked after' children and make particular efforts to try and support the child, so these cases are rarer. The member commented that this is reassuring - many boroughs do not do so well.

6.13 The chair thanked the secondary school representatives and officers for attending.

RESOLVED

- The council and schools will be asked for corrected figures for fixed term & permanent exclusions, and for these to also be expressed as a percentage of the school roll.
- Schools will be asked for their intervention policies and practices for fixed term & permanent exclusions
- The council will be asked to supply more information on managed moves & re-integration into the mainstream school provisions
- Secondary schools will be invited back.

7. UPDATE ON FREE SCHOOLS AND PLACES

7.1 The report was noted.

8. WORK-PLAN

8.1 The chair reported that the bullying report went to cabinet and a report back is due in February.

RESOLVED

The project manager reported that the parent governor

representatives' term had now ended and the chair requested that a letter of thanks be sent to Colin Elliott and Leticia Ojeda Gonzalez. The committee noted that the Reverend Elder had not attended in a while and that his contribution was missed. The chair requested that a letter be sent following this up.