



EDUCATION AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee held on Tuesday 16 November 2010 at 7.00 pm at Town Hall, Peckham Road, London SE5 8UB

PRESENT: Councillor David Hubber (Chair)
Councillor the Right Revd Emmanuel Oyewole
Councillor Lorraine Lauder MBE
Councillor Adele Morris
Councillor Rosie Shimell
Councillor Althea Smith
Councillor Cleo Soanes
Sharon Donno

**MEMBERS OF THE
PUBLIC :** Lisa Zychowicz

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:** Julie Timbrell, project manager
Dr Ann Marie Connolly, director of public health
Rosie Dalton-Lucas, health and well-being manager
Jin Lim, consultant in public health
Clare Smith, healthy schools adviser, children's services
Tim Hetherington, strategy development manager, sports

1. APOLOGIES

1.1 There were no apologies.

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 There were no disclosures of interests or dispensations.

4. MINUTES

4.1 The minutes of the 4 October 2010 committee meeting were approved, with the correction of the spelling of Cllr Adele Morris's name.

4.2 It was reported that the former parent governor representatives', Jane Hole and Colin Elliott, terms have now come to an end. Elections for parent governor representatives for next two years will shortly take place. The Chair expressed his thanks for their services.

5. REVIEW OF PARENTING SUPPORT - PART ONE: SCHOOL ADMISSIONS

5.1 The committee agreed considered the review topic.

RESOLVED

The committee agreed they would pursue the following topic by:

i) Holding interviews with officers and parents representatives and, if possible, any governors in a one-off session

ii) Request evidence from the Admissions Forum

iii) Contact the Early Years Parents Forum with a view to visiting to consult them on the review.

6. REVIEW OF CHILDHOOD OBESITY AND SPORTS PROVISION FOR SECONDARY AND PRIMARY CHILDREN

6.1 Jin Lin, consultant in Public Health, did a presentation on 'Obesity and Physical Activity' (appended to the minutes).

6.2 Information was first presented on the prevalence of childhood overweight and obesity in the population of Southwark.

6.3 Data sets were presented that indicated that as children move from reception to year 6 the percentage of overweight and obese children increases.

6.4 The trend is generally raising and Southwark has a greater number of overweight and obese children than the English and London average.

6.5 Data sets by community council area were presented and it was noted that there is a link between obesity and social deprivation. Particular hot spots were identified.

- 6.6 There are more obese boys than girls.
- 6.7 The presentation then moved on to look at the evidence of what interventions work to reduce the problem of childhood obesity. The recommendations emphasize the importance of a holistic, multi faceted approach.
- 6.8 The specific 'NICE' recommendations are to increase physical activity, improve the physical environment to encourage physical activity and to promote evidence based behavior change.
- 6.9 Information was presented on the strategic approach to reducing childhood obesity including the national and borough wide approach and work with schools, teachers and parents.
- 6.10 Three locally effective interventions were highlighted. MEND (Mind, Exercise, Do it) was part of a national trial and had been effective at decreasing children's BMI (Body Mass Index) and reducing waist circumference. The 'Superstars Challenge' had been similarly effective. Lastly the Bacons School Partnership has seen a year on year increase in physical activity.
- 6.11 Southwark's strategy is focused on weight management, targeted at those at greatest risk, aims to shift the curve, and seeks to prevent childhood obesity by working with children in early years.
- 6.12 It was noted that Southwark's recent commitment to free school meals will be part of a whole school approach to reducing childhood obesity. The 'whole school approach' emphasizes engaging with pupils, teachers and parents, embedding healthy eating in the curriculum, encouraging healthy behavior in and out of school and linking transports plans with the physical environment and the food strategy.
- 6.13 Southwark has a fast food outlet strategy aimed at limiting the saturation by reducing the number of new outlets in certain areas and promoting healthier menus at existing outlets.
- 6.14 Members of the committee were invited to ask questions.
- 6.15 A member asked when did we start to develop a problem with childhood obesity; commenting that we have not always been an obese country and borough. Officers commented that it has been a gradual process through changes to our way of life; travel, work and changes to diet. Data has been collected over the last 4 years.
- 6.16 There was a comment from members that there is evidence that overweight and obese parents are more likely to have children with a weight problem. Members asked what programmes are there to address families? Officers indicated that the MEND programme works with parents and there are national programmes which target family behaviour.
- 6.17 Members indicted that there had been a debate at Council Assembly about breakfast clubs being more effective than lunch. Officers commented that the data presented had not looked at breakfast clubs for free provision; however they had considered, and would recommend, a whole school approach.

- 6.18 There was a query on the provision of lunch and why this needed to be free. An officer commented that the concept is that some families on low incomes may not think it is a good use of limited resources to spend funds on the purchase of school meals. Uptake increases through universal provision and it reduces stigmatisation.
- 6.19 There was a query on nutritional standards and if they are high enough. Officers commented that they are high; however Southwark has around 27 providers which provide a challenge to monitor. The providers in the free school meals pilot are different. One positive thing is that the pilot will enable us to meet with the different providers.
- 6.20 A member asked at what point is the nutritional value of the food measured? Is this done at the menu planning stage or delivery point? Officers clarified that this is done at the menu stage.
- 6.21 Concern was expressed that that lunches provided are often prepared hours in advance. The food is often insipid tasting and then children choose the tastier bits, which may not be the healthiest parts of the meal. Mover sometimes the food at delivery point has little resemblance to the menu description.
- 6.22 A member commented that responsibility for school meal provision has now moved to the governors which may not be realistic for them to adequately monitor.
- 6.23 A member queried the involvement of schools in the Bacons partnership and the level of participation. Officers explained that all schools in the South of the borough had an opportunity to participate. There was a similar partnership for the north of the borough.
- 6.24 Officers reported that the Leader had written to all the schools inviting them to participate in the Olympic school programme and the council is aiming for 100 % participation.
- 6.25 Officers reported that schools had been specifically recruited for the 'Superstars Challenge'. Schools with high levels of obesity had been approached. Outside of this we are also offering the 'community games'.
- 6.26 Members asked if schools have been alerted to the high levels of obesity. Officers reported that they write to all schools individually with the relevant data sets and comparisons.
- 6.27 Members asked if officers target schools with a high prevalence. Officer reported that they did and gave an example of a social networking initiative that was targeted at schools with a higher prevalence. Work on childhood obesity is also related to the School Development Plan. The Healthy School Programme contacted schools to encourage them to participate in programmes such as the 'Dance for Life' initiative.
- 6.28 Officers reported that there is evidence that behaviour patterns are set down before the age of 5. Messages to parents are directed at ensuring that parent's

undertand that from an early age that excess weight can adversely affect children's life chances.

- 6.29 Members asked how much support and education will be done with parents to improve nutrition at home during the school meals pilot. Officers respond that this is part of the negotiation with schools; a whole school approach with schools is being advocated. Parents would receive a pack and the school environment as a whole would be addressed. Members commented that engaging with parents face to face is important. Officers noted that interventions have to be sustainable. It is probably they will provide general information and more intensive support and intervention for children and families with weight problems.
- 6.30 Sharon Donno, the head teacher representative, commented that weight data for 3 year olds would be helpful. Officers commented that the government started to require 4 years ago that children are measured at reception and year 6. This is a national programme and enables comparisons to be made. The potential for undertaking a local weighing programme using school nurses was discussed. The Chair indicated that this could be considered as a scrutiny recommendation.
- 6.31 The head teacher representative commented that when her Children's centre had offered courses on cooking, shopping and nutrition it had a very low take up by parents and carers. However when much of the course was rebranded and a professional chef employed to deliver the content parents found this much more appealing. Making the course more aspirational proved very effective.
- 6.32 Members asked about provision of sports in schools. Officers commented that many schools have moved away from an afternoon of sports. The national curriculum changed the priorities of schools and sports provision is now much more the choice of heads. Officers commented that for sports to be effective it's needs to be fun and of high quality; coaches need the right level of skills. Training local people to be sports leaders has been effective.
- 6.33 A members commented that she would like to see more time set aside for sports and she also expressed concern that school recreation time is used as a time to punish children and that this has an adverse impact on activity levels. Officers commented that there is now much more recognition of the importance of an active playtime and outdoor play is now increasingly encouraged. The 'Superstars Challenge' ensured that children received 3 hours of sports provision and that included 45 minutes of constant cardio-vascular movement. Time spent travelling to and from the activity was not counted, whereas this usually can be. It did take time to negotiate this level of provision with schools as this was 3 hours less academic time delivered.
- 6.34 Members commented that the combination of the 'Superstars Challenge' with the free school meal offer might be the most effective strategy. Officers commented that this could be a positive development. The Chair indicated that the committee may consider this as a recommendation.

RESOLVED

The committee agreed they would continue to pursue the above topic by:

- i) Utilising social media via Southwark websites to gather the views of residents & community. A draft list of questions will be circulated, and then websites such as the SE1 and the East Dulwich Forum will be contacted to see if they are willing to host a discussion. A short survey will also be produced.
- ii) Requesting that Bacons PE and School Sports Partnership send a report to Scrutiny based on their data and the impact of the sports programme in combating obesity and maintaining a healthy weight.
- iii) Requesting that officers make recommendations on the review topic so these can feed into the final scrutiny report.

7. TRAINING

- 7.1 The Committee discussed safeguarding training for members. It was agreed that in house training was the strong preference of members. This will be fed back to relevant officers with a view to arranging for the New Year.

8. SOUTHWARK YOUTH COUNCIL

- 8.1 Southwark Youth Council will be invited to attend the January committee meeting.

9. WORK PROGRAMME

- 9.1 The new independent safeguarding chair has been invited to the January meeting. The annual safeguarding report will be presented at this meeting.
- 9.2 There is a safeguarding conference late January and details of this will be circulated to members.

CHAIR:

DATED: