ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY, 18 APRIL 2019 AT 7.00 PM

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Members:
Councillor Ivis Williams (Chair), Councillors Linda Bird, Angela Cornforth (Item 5 - 7), Gary Dillon, Ann-Marie Cousins, Mariam Lolavar, Anthony Okereke (Item 5 - 7) and Patricia Greenwell (Item 5 - 7)

Under Standing Orders
Councillor David Gardner (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools)

Officers
Assistant Director Commissioning and Resources (Children's Services), Head of Admissions, Place Planning, Systems and Resilience, Health Improvement Principal and Corporate Governance Officer

Item No.

1 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Monsignor Rothon and Pauline Sheath.

2 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.
3 **Declarations of Interest**

**Resolved –**

That the list of Councillors’ memberships as Council appointed representatives on outside bodies, joint committees and school governing bodies be noted.

4 **Minutes**

**Resolved -**

That the minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young Peoples Scrutiny Panel held on 28 February 2019 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

5 **Cabinet Member Report**

The Cabinet Member for Children’s Services and Schools introduced the report providing the Panel with an update on action and progress against the Cabinet Member’s priorities.

At 7.05pm, Councillor Okereke joined the meeting.

At 7.08pm, Councillor Cornforth joined the meeting.

In response to questions raised by the Panel, the Cabinet Member stated that performance concerns at Key stage 4 and outcomes for young people at 16 in the Borough were recognised as areas that needed to be addressed as a matter of urgency. He advised that notwithstanding financial pressures faced by Local Authorities (LA) in England, Greenwich had retained a School Improvement team and Officers were working closely with school leaders to ensure pupil data was continuously monitored with the appropriate interventions put in place to raise achievement. He informed the Panel that the LA had no legal responsibilities for Academies but did work collaboratively with them as part of the Learning Improvement Partnership (LIP) to improve outcomes across the LA.

The Assistant Director Strategy, Performance & Commissioning advised that the average Attainment 8 score of Greenwich pupils were in line with pupils in England, clarifying that tracking of pupils varied across schools, however Officers analysed pupil data in order to identify cohorts of children at risk of
underperforming with findings subsequently shared with schools to inform future tracking.

At 7.37pm, Councillor Greenwell joined the meeting.

The Panel requested a case study on a school that had been subject to the Local Authority and School Monitoring Meeting (LASMM) process and a list of schools engaging with the School Improvement team.

**Action: DCS**

The Cabinet Member clarified that safe reduction of the numbers of Looked After Children remained a priority emphasising it was in the best interest of children to be cared for by their own families and in their communities whenever it was safe for them to do so. He advised that in Greenwich there had been a recent increase in the number of unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC), having received children from the rota across London which was in place to reduce the impact of UASC on individual boroughs.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Cabinet Member stated that Ward Councillors were emailed and meetings arranged with relevant Officers to discuss and address concerns on the increase in violence and knife crime in Greenwich and elsewhere in London. He added that Greenwich had an excellent Community Safety team and were developing an integrated unit lead by the Assistant Director Youth Services, which would support young people who were being exploited through gangs and criminal activity.

An update on the integrated unit would be provided to the Panel at a future meeting.

**Action: DCS**

The Cabinet Member informed the Panel that with the increasing population there was an increasing cohort of children in Greenwich who had very complex needs and for whom specialist provision was essential. He stated that due to specialist capacity in the Borough some of these pupils were in out of Borough placements for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and that this continued to be an area of high spend. He clarified that the LA was unsuccessful in its recent bid to obtaining funding for a special school but would look to submit a further bid when the Government introduced another round whilst continuing to look at what alternative funds were available.
Resolved –

That the update from the Cabinet Member for Children’s and Schools on action and progress be noted.

6 School Admissions Annual Report

The Head of Admissions, Place Planning Systems & Resilience introduced the report.

In response to questions, the Head of Admissions advised that the Families Information Service was available to offer support to parents needing help with the school admission process and that schools were well versed on the process. She stated that in a recent survey of parents about primary and secondary admissions, parents indicated that they felt information was readily available and accessible. In respect of online applications Royal Greenwich were exceeding Central Government targets of 80%, with 97% of primary and 96% of secondary applications being made online in 2018.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Assistant Director stated that it was the responsibility of schools to ensure they were recruiting the right teachers, which would be monitored through the OFSTED school inspection framework and the schools improvement action plan.

The Head of Admissions drew the Panel’s attention to ‘Table 15: Cross-Borough movement as at 1st September’ in the report, stating that Royal Greenwich schools were increasing in popularity though not yet to the point of being a net importer. She added that there were sufficient school places to accommodate Greenwich residents.

Resolved –

That the Children’s Services School Admissions Annual report be noted.

7 Children and Young People Plan Performance Monitor 2018/19 Quarter 3

The Assistant Director, Strategy, Performance and Commissioning introduced the report to the Panel and highlighted the performance in the third quarter of the 2018/19 reporting year.
The panel requested details of the proportion of young people who were Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) as of December 2018 who were also children in care.

**Action: DCS**

In response to questions raised the Panel, the Assistant Director explained that the Tier 2 Skills for Change programme was focused intervention delivered by Addaction and aimed at young people who were on the threshold of substance misuse. She stated that the Amy Winehouse Foundation had been part of the delivery (along with school nurses) of the wider prevention work that takes place with schools. She added that Tier 3 support was available for those misusing substances or at high risk and that although performance for Tier 3 services was low in numbers outcomes were good. She explained that funding for the substance misuse service was provided by a public health grant that had been reduced substantially. However, the service had been brought in-house to Children’s Services with improvements expected because of greater integration.

The panel requested information on the reasons behind the increased emergency gastroenteritis admissions for under 1s.

**Action: DCS**

The Assistant Director advised that the ‘Children who go missing from home and care 2017-18’ annual report, presented at the scrutiny meeting of 17 January 19, provided the Panel with the profile of children missing home and care in Greenwich. She stated that children go missing for a number of reasons; some running away from something, known as push factors; others running to something, known as pull factors. She said that the multi-agency meeting, Greenwich Risk Adolescent Safeguarding Prevention (GRASP) panel would share information across services about adolescents effectively and in a timely way in order to reduce harm and identify actions on individual cases that are followed through in all agencies to reduce risk.

In response to questions raised by the Panel, the Assistant Director stated the Q3 figure of 56% in relation to the ‘percentage of children accessing specialist CAMHS Level 2 interventions reporting improvement in Routine Outcome Measures across all pathways’ had been RAG rated red, though the figure was not unusual nationally it indicated a drop from previous levels. Therefore, it was an area of concern and the service was working in partnership with Oxleas to address it. She added that comparative data could not be provided as most CAHMS providers did not currently measure outcomes for children’s mental health and Greenwich CAHMS were leading in monitoring this.
The Health Principal advised that quarterly data for pupils who were overweight or obese was not available as the National Child Measurement programme provided the data yearly; it measured children once a year at reception and at Year 6.

**Resolved –**

That the performance as at the end of the third quarter of the 2018/19 reporting year against the key measures covering the four fundamentals underpinning the Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) be noted.

The meeting closed at 9.12 pm

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Chair