

PRESENT

Members of the Committee
Councillor David Lindsay (Chairman)
Councillor Elizabeth Rutherford (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Judith Blakeman
Councillor Victoria Borwick
Councillor Professor Sir Anthony Coates, Bt, BSc, MD, FRCPath, FRCP
Councillor Catherine Faulks
Councillor Tim Jones
Councillor Sam Mackover

Co-opted Voting Members

Dr Samar Al-Zaher (parent governor)
Mr John O'Donnell (Roman Catholic Diocesan Board of Education)

Other Members in Attendance

Councillor Elizabeth Campbell (Cabinet Member for Family and Children's Services and Education and Libraries)

Officers

Mr Andrew Christie, Tri-borough Executive Director for Children's Services
Mr Ian Heggs, Tri-borough Director of Schools Commissioning
Ms Karen Tyerman, Tri-borough Director for Commissioning (Children's Services)
Mr John Page, Director for Family Services
Mr Andrew Tagg, Head of Resources
Mr Mike Potter, Head of Commissioning (Early Intervention and Workforce Development)
Mr Peter Woodhead, Team Manager, Children with Disabilities
Ms Clair Bantin, Scrutiny Manager
Mr Ivor Quinn, Principal Governance Administrator

A1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Robert Atkinson and Emma Will; Mr Paul Quinn (parent governor); Mr Kieran Parsons (teacher); the Revd Dr William Taylor (London Diocesan Board for Schools) and Mrs Kathleen Williams (headteacher).

Arising thereon:

Co-opted Members

The Chairman said that he valued the contribution that co-opted members made to the committee's work and therefore he expected those members to attend regularly. He understood that personal and work commitments could change and make it difficult for co-opted members to attend, but he would rather that members facing such difficulties stepped down so that others might take their place.

He concluded his remarks by thanking Councillor Coates for his work during the past two years as chairman.

A2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

A3 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on 1 and 23 May 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A4 CABINET MEMBERS' REPORT

The Cabinet Member introduced the report and answered members' questions. She said that, as usual, the report represented an eclectic mix of subjects, but she highlighted Golborne Children's Centre and Chelsea Academy achievements in receiving outstanding Ofsted reports.

Tri-borough Children's Services Update

In response to questions from Councillor Jones, it was agreed that a briefing note be provided about support to schools for English as a second language and for autism, pre and post tri-borough changes.

Action by: DSC

Tri-Borough Troubled Families

In response to questions from Councillors Blakeman and Mackover, Mr Christie said that the figure of 400 families in paragraph 3.3 was a DCLG estimate extrapolated from national figures. He said that the RBKC view was that the figure was more likely to be nearer 200, and he suspected that the Government would broaden the criteria so that more families were included.

Mr Christie said that the Government provided an upfront grant of £60,000 to start the scheme and then there was a mixture of an attachment fee and payment by results, as explained in paragraph 3.6 of the report.

In response to comments from Councillor Blakeman about personal budgets, Mr Christie said that proposals in the Queen's Speech had

referred to children with special needs and disabled children. He said that the troubled families initiative was targeted at out of work households.

Mr O'Donnell asked if schools could bid for the £4,000 payment to help them in their work to assist pupils and their families. Mr Christie said he had not considered that, but a report was being prepared for September about service delivery. He added that £4,000 would only buy a limited level of service provision and it would need to complement existing provision to be effective. Mr Christie said that proposals to work with schools could be considered, but there could not be an open bidding process to use these limited funds.

Improvements to Library Stock Supply Processes

Councillor Mackover asked if figures for lost and stolen stock could be provided for RBKC, LBHF and WCC. Councillor Campbell said she would ask Mr Ruse, Tri-borough Director of Libraries, to provide a briefing note.

Action by: DL

St Quintin Centre Tea Party Celebration

Councillor Blakeman asked if the ward councillors had been invited to this event. Mr Page undertook to find out.

Action by: DFS

Inspections

The Chairman referred to the judgements that St Joseph's and St Clement and St James schools were satisfactory and he wanted the Council and committee, with the schools, to consider how they could improve in future. Mr O'Donnell said that under the former Ofsted regime these schools would have been judged to be 'good'. Councillor Campbell accepted that this was true, but said that standards had been increased and improvement was necessary. The Chairman pointed to international research that showed that the achievement of British pupils in subjects such as maths and the sciences were falling compared to other countries.

Councillors Borwick and Faulks declared personal interests as they were both governors of Golborne Children's Centre. Dr Al-Zaher asked how Chelsea Academy was assessed as there were no GCSE, AS and A2 results. Mr Christie and Mr Heggs said that a combination of internal assessment and achievement and attainment at Key Stages 3 and 5 would have been used.

A5 SERVICES FOR DISABLED CHILDREN AND THEIR FAMILIES

Mr Page and Mr Woodhead were present to introduce the report and answer questions from members. The officers explained that the service sought to meet parents' wishes and to both reduce the

number of assessments and lighten the assessments. Regular consultation meetings were held, as well as the annual consultation.

Councillor Blakeman said that she and Councillor Atkinson had recently visited St Quintin and transport was a real gap in provision. Mr Page replied that this was a significant issue and the officers were considering how families and children could avoid travelling from the south of the borough or from Earl's Court to the north. He said that a tri-borough review of services for children with disabilities was planned. The work needed to be scoped, to include Special Educational Needs, and would be included in the work plan for 2012/13. Councillor Campbell said that she understood the problem and St Quintin was, in this regard, a real victim of its own success. In response to a question from Councillor Borwick, Mr Page said that the outcome of last year's consultation would be summarised in the latest consultation publicity.

In response to questions from Councillor Jones, Mr Woodhead said that 11 children had the offer from 12 nights a year at the Haven. He added that one 14 year old child had been given 60 nights in one year. He assured members that the service was meeting all demand for the Haven.

A6 CHILDREN'S CENTRES

Taken with

A7 EARLY HELP AND TARGETED SERVICES STRATEGY SUB-GROUP – MEETING ON 13 JUNE

Ms Tyerman and Mr Potter were present to introduce the report and answer members' questions.

Ms Tyerman spoke about the strategy for the future development of Children's Centres following the approval of the Early Help and Targeted Services Strategy by the Cabinet in January 2012. She also spoke about the key principles and proposals and explained how the consultation with interested parties would work.

Councillor Coates, as chairman of the sub-group, took the committee through the notes of the sub-group's meeting and outlined some of the issues discussed.

Councillor Campbell said that she recognised that there had been some confusion about nursery schools and children's centres. She had concluded that it was important to keep the two things separate. The strategy discussed in the report was about children's centres. She suggested that the nursery schools issue should be discussed in the autumn. Following a suggestion from Councillor Jones, it was agreed that the future funding of nursery schools and nursery places in primary schools should be reported in the autumn.

Action by: H of R

Councillor Campbell said she had agreed that the frequently asked questions part of the consultation should include reference to the Government's proposal for nursery entitlement for deprived two year olds.

In respect of Golborne and Maxilla, Councillor Campbell said that Mr Heggs had recently met the governing body of Maxilla and she, and Mr Heggs, would be meeting Golborne in the coming week. She said that the Council would try to support the governing bodies in making decisions about the centres' future.

Councillor Faulks said that Golborne and Maxilla were not happy about the proposal to have Holmefield House as a hub as this might well affect the viability of their merger plans. Councillor Campbell said that it was envisaged that Holmefield House would have health services and the children's centres would have childcare. Mr Christie commented that there would need to be a mixed economy of provision because the health world was changing with clinical commissioning groups coming in and the committee would need to be aware of this. Councillor Blakeman said that it was a fact that Maxilla was closing and that should have been taken into account. Mr Potter replied that the consultation began from the status quo and if alternative proposals for the hub emerged during the consultation then they would be considered. Councillor Borwick spoke about concern in respect of the viability of Golborne. Councillor Campbell said she was aware of this and the Council was trying to broker a solution. Mr Christie added that Mr Tagg was helping on the financial side.

In response to a comment from Councillor Coates that the sub-group would need to continue, the Chairman said that it would need to be time-limited and it should aim to finish its work by the committee's meeting on 21 November.

Councillor Campbell said that the results of the consultation would be reported to the Cabinet on 31 October. Councillor Coates suggested that the sub-group should meet the day before as this had worked well in the June cycle of meetings and gave immediacy to the discussions.

In response to questions about the definition of children in need and children with additional needs, Mr Page replied that:

1. There is a legal definition in the Children Act 1989 for children and families needing intensive assistance where health or development is, or is likely to be, impaired. Factors considered would include parenting; mental health; relationships; domestic violence; poor physical conditions, e.g. lack of food.
2. Additional needs arose where the child was prevented from thriving and flourishing because of other factors – the parent

might be very young or isolated, leading to the child not being school-ready.

3. The difference between the two was, in many cases, a matter of degree.

A8 OFSTED INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

Mr Page introduced the report and said that the two week inspection had been very tough and thorough. He added that the inspection regime was now changing. Mr Page said he was pleased that Ofsted had judged services to be good and the Council would be looking, with health colleagues, to improve to the outstanding level.

In response to a question from Dr Al-Zaher, Mr Page said that the views of parents and looked after children were surveyed independently of the Council. Councillor Faulks referred to paragraph 24 of the Ofsted report where it dealt with refuge provision for victims of domestic violence. Mr Page said this had been a point of contention, as refuges within the borough would tend to take boys over 12, but most refuges do not take them over 14 years of age.

The Chairman asked Mr Page to thank the staff involved as appropriate.

A9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME 2012-13

Following suggestions from the Chairman it was agreed that there should be two new sub-groups: (1) to consider Ofsted reports on schools, with governors and heads being invited to attend; (2) to consider capital and other expenditure on schools.

Mr O'Donnell said that a previous committee had established an Ofsted sub-group and it had rankled with heads and governors as they had felt summoned to be admonished. The Chairman said that was not the intention and heads and governors would be invited to attend and it would be an opportunity to share best practice.

The Chairman said he would also expect members to make at least one visit to a setting which came under the committee's remit.

A10 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Forward Plan

Councillor Borwick referred to the Key Decision in respect of the remodelling of the youth service. Councillor Campbell said she had reported briefly on this in her report elsewhere on the agenda. She was pleased to report that Mr O'Keefe, the Head of Service, had taken the staff with him on the proposal. The Council would offer support to the new arrangements, through a service contract, as this had always been an outstanding service. It was noted that the

Early Help Sub-group would consider youth provision at its meeting in July.

The remainder of the report was noted.

A11 ANY OTHER ORAL OR WRITTEN PUBLIC ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERED URGENT

Key Decision – St Quintin Centre – Soil Remediation and Drainage Replacement

Mr O'Donnell referred to the comments he had made when this proposed Key Decision had recently been circulated. He did not object to the recommendation, but would question how and why this matter was not identified at the time of the administration of the original contractor. Mr O'Donnell said he had been a member of a special working party, set up to examine how and why the Council found itself in a situation with an administration of a contractor. He said that in detailed cross questioning the working party was assured that all the work undertaken at that time by the failed contractor had been reviewed and was acceptable. This Key Decision suggested that this was not the case. The contractor going into administration revealed shortfalls in the control of the original project. The question had to be posed as to whether anything further was going to come to light.

Mr Christie commented that the problems with the previous contractor had occurred before his time with the Council – at that time the work was managed by FCS, but after reorganisation it was now being handled by Property Services. He had been assured that works were all in hand to resolve the outstanding matters. He added that Mr Clark, the Director of Property Services, had written to Mr O'Donnell in response to his concerns.

There were no other matters.

The meeting ended at 8.20pm.

Chairman