

PRESENT

Members of the Committee
Councillor David Lindsay (Chairman)
Councillor Elizabeth Rutherford (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Robert Atkinson
Councillor Victoria Borwick
Councillor Professor Sir Anthony Coates, Bt, BSc, MD, FRCPath, FRCP
Councillor Catherine Faulks
Councillor Tim Jones
Councillor Sam Mackover
Councillor Dez O'Neill
Councillor Emma Will

Co-opted Voting Members

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

Co-opted Non-Voting Members

Mr Kieran Parsons (teacher)
Mrs Kathleen Williams (headteacher)

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
Dr Melanie Smith, Director of Public Health, NHS Kensington and Chelsea
Mr Tony Porter, Head of Schools Commissioning
Ms Kate Singleton, Head of Combined Safeguarding, Review and Quality Assurance Service
Ms Natasha Bishopp, Tri-borough Troubled Families Co-ordinator
Mr Ivor Quinn, Principal Governance Administrator

A1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillor Jonathon Read and the Revd Dr William Taylor (London Diocesan Board for Schools).

A2 MEMBERSHIP

The committee noted the resignation of Councillor Judith Blakeman and the appointment of Councillor Dez O'Neill in her stead; the appointment of Councillor Jonathon Read; and the resignation of Mr Paul Quinn, co-opted parent governor.

A3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

A4 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2012 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

A5 JOINT STRATEGIC NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND JOINT HEALTH AND WELL BEING STRATEGY

Dr Melanie Smith, Director of Public Health, NHS Kensington and Chelsea, spoke briefly about the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.

In response to questions and comments from members, Dr Smith commented that:

1. A working group had been set up to consider how the effect of welfare reform on families might be mitigated. The links between employment and good mental health were recognised. The borough was an 'outlier' for severe and enduring mental illness and this was a priority area, needing a whole family approach given the potential effect on children. There was no simple causal reason for mental health problems being high in certain wards, but there were complex patterns of associated factors to do with deprivation, social isolation, age structure, inner city life, etc. The committee asked for copies of the case for change document.

Action by: DPH

2. A strategy for dealing with child obesity was being developed which would emphasise activity, rather than just sport.
3. She would take on board the observation that figures for average incomes per household masked the fact that there were much lower incomes and higher deprivation in some wards.
4. The Marmot recommendations would be a challenge, both nationally and locally.

5. The health and wellbeing board would be holding stakeholder events. The committee asked that members be invited. **Action by: DPH**
6. Tri-borough had provided the opportunity for greater productivity and analysis, as expertise and innovation were shared; the challenges arose from having three governance processes and three scrutiny committees.
7. Funding would be tight and the 2013/14 public health grant would be a ring-fenced budget; there might be a gap between PCT funding and funding transferred to the Council, but at this stage it appeared that it would not be too large. Efficiencies and savings would be sought to provide funds to meet demand-led growth.

The committee also discussed poor dental health, eye tests, misuse of drugs, vitamin D deficiency, population increase and using data more comprehensively.

A6 CABINET MEMBERS' REPORT

The Cabinet Member introduced the report and answered members' questions.

Provisional 2012 Key Stage Results

Councillor Campbell spoke about the tremendous education success this year. She paid tribute to headteachers and staff and to the school improvement team, headed until recently by Miss Hall, whose leadership and inspiration had played a great part in the success. The committee agreed that the education results were a great success and a tribute to Miss Hall's work and recorded its sadness at the news that she was seriously ill.

Mr Parsons commented that success came at a cost. He knew from his visits to schools as the local NUT secretary that many teachers were suffering from stress.

Mr Heggs introduced Mr Tony Porter who had taken over Miss Hall's post on a temporary basis. In response to a question about targets for school results, Mr Heggs said that the target-setting system had been abolished, although he agreed that the latest results exceeded what might have been predicted.

In response to further questions, Mr Heggs said that of those who had applied on time, 14 children were currently without a reception place for primary and 14 were without a secondary place. He added that these were low numbers compared to previous years and, although late applications would increase the numbers, the Council had sufficient school places to meet its statutory duty.

The committee asked for a briefing note about the number of children who received their first and second preferences.

Action by: DSC

Remodelling School Meals

Councillor Jones cautioned against the dangers of having a large contract which might lead to less quality. Mr Christie said that the Council was acting as an agent on behalf of schools and the contract would specify health and quality standards.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) and Mainstream Provision

Councillor Campbell confirmed that, as well as Marlborough, Barlby would have provision for children with Autistic Spectrum Condition.

Holland Park School

In response to a request, Councillor Campbell said that if a celebration was held for the opening of the new school building in November then the committee would be invited.

Action by: DSC

Consultation on Children's Centres

The committee discussed the consultation which had not finished yet. Councillor Campbell said that parents had raised concerns about the proposal to outsource child care, namely that costs would increase, and quality and continuity of staff would diminish. Some members said that if costs were increased many parents would not be able to afford to continue with their jobs. It was noted that another group of parents had said they would be willing to pay more to allow the child care to be kept in-house. Mr Christie advised that this proposal would be remodelled. Councillor Campbell reminded the committee that in the current financial climate the policy was to target those most in need.

Lost and Stolen Library Stock

Councillor Mackover referred to the briefing note he had requested at the previous meeting and said that he was surprised at the high numbers of lost and stolen library stock. The committee asked for a copy of the note.

Action by: Governance Services

A7 TRI-BOROUGH UPDATE

Mr Christie said that most of the progress on tri-borough had been reported elsewhere. He referred to:

1. The remodelling of school meals and of passenger transport.
2. The three separate operating systems for IT, finance and personnel that would need to be brought together, although there would be no easy solutions.
3. Tri-borough opportunities in the significant service reviews: leaving care services; services for children in care; and provision for disabled children and special educational needs.

A8 CHILD PROTECTION REPORT 2011-12

Mr Page and Ms Singleton were present to introduce the report and answer questions from members.

Mr Christie explained that Mr Page as the director was responsible for the delivery of family services, whereas Ms Singleton was responsible for quality oversight and assurance for all three boroughs.

The committee noted that, at 31 March 2012, 79 children were subject to a child protection plan. It was agreed that it would be helpful if a breakdown of this figure was provided for the next meeting, giving the numbers in each category which led to the need for a child protection plan.

Action: DFS

The committee discussed the systems in place for transferring case conference papers and responsibility when a family moved away from Kensington and Chelsea. Mr Christie said that basic information about the welfare of children was transferred in London by housing authorities. He added that for looked after children there was a statutory duty to notify the new local authority. There were also London-wide child protection procedures regarding the transfer of cases.

A9 TROUBLED FAMILIES – DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING A TRI-BOROUGH APPROACH

Mr Page and Ms Bishopp were present to introduce the report and answer questions from members.

In response to a question about the difference between children in need and children with additional needs, Mr Page said that the point had been covered in the previous meeting and recorded in the minutes, but it was worth reiterating:

1. There was a legal definition in the Children Act 1989 for children and families needing intensive assistance where health or development was, or was 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. Within 'troubled families' there could be children in need or children with additional needs depending on the nature and degree of the concern and the impact on the child.

In response to questions, Ms Bishopp explained the three tier triage service (paragraph 7.4), the broad sanctions and the mentoring that would be available.

The committee agreed that this was an important subject and it would need to review progress in due course.

A10 MISCELLANEOUS MATTERS

Forward Plan

Noted.

Visits

A list of FCS settings was tabled. Members were asked to let Mr Quinn have their choices – each member to make one visit.

Action by: All Members

Sub-Groups

The Chairman said that at the next meeting in November the committee would need to consider establishing a new sub-group, as the Early Help group would have concluded its work by then. He suggested a group to review the capital spend of major building projects and whatever else the sub-group wished to look at in the context of that review. Members were asked to start to think about whether they would like to be on that group and let me him know. If members had other ideas for sub-groups then again they should let him know. In view of the importance of child protection and safeguarding, Mr Christie suggested that the committee might wish to consider a group looking at either provision for disabled children, in the light of the Government's proposals to publish a Bill setting out various expectations; or provision for children in care, including those leaving care; or meeting the health needs of children in the Royal Borough, including issues to raise with the Health and Well-being Board. He added that given the competing demands on officer time it would only be possible for FCS to support one group at a time.

A11 EARLY HELP AND TARGETED SERVICES STRATEGY SUB-GROUP – MEETING ON 6 SEPTEMBER

Councillor Coates, as chairman of the sub-group, took the committee through the notes of the sub-group's meeting (copies of which were tabled) and outlined some of the issues discussed.

Mr Parsons said that he hoped that youth services staff were aware of the implications of leaving the Council's employment and he supported a five year guarantee of support. Mr Christie said that there had been very extensive consultation with staff, but he took the point that staff needed to be fully aware of the choice they were making.

A12 ANY OTHER ORAL OR WRITTEN PUBLIC ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN CONSIDERED URGENT

None.

The meeting ended at 8.50pm.

Chairman