

THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA**Meeting of the Council – 26 April 2006****Item 8 – Submission from the Family and Children’s Services
Overview and Scrutiny Committee****Views of Young People on the Royal Borough's Draft Children and
Young People's Plan**

The Family and Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee (FCS OSC) recently invited selected young people to comment on the Council’s draft Children and Young People’s Plan (CYPP). This report sets out the views of those young people on this plan and some of the Committee’s responses.

FOR INFORMATION

Background - The Children and Young People’s Plan:

- 1.0 The CYPP is about how the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea, and other local organisations in the Children and Young People’s Strategic Partnership (CYPSP) intend to improve outcomes for local children and young people over the next three years.
- 2.0 The CYPP will be informed by the views of the children and families that were collected in the many public consultation exercises undertaken by different services in the Borough in 2005-06. The CYPSP has a user consultation strategy for 2006-07 that will promote rigorously the engagement of children and families in shaping our future services, and this will be reflected in future years of the CYPP.

**The Family and Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny
Committee – Listening to Young People**

- 3.0 As part of the development of the CYPP, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) invited three groups of young people to present their views on the CYPP to the committee at a meeting held at the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre on 14 March 2006. The report they submitted to the OSC is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 4.0 Background information on the three groups:

- 4.1 **Holland Park School:** the year 10 students in this group were all elected by their peers to represent them in a wider school community forum. The group was made up of young people from a variety of backgrounds and between them they represented sixteen countries and eleven languages.
- 4.2 The members of this group were of a range of ability levels including six of the most able in the year group who have recently visited Cambridge University as part of an Aim Higher initiative and all felt strongly about the day to day to issues that affect themselves and their peers.
- 4.3 **Looked After Young People:** Members of this group all had experience of being looked after in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and between them experienced a range of placements including in foster care and children's homes.
- 4.4 A small number of young people participated in this group and a brief overview paints the following picture:
- Ages range from 17 – 21.
 - Two young people are living in one of the Borough's children's homes.
 - Some are care leavers living independently with support from the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea's Independence Support Team.
 - One young person has a 3-year old child.
 - A few can be described as being looked after because they were unaccompanied minors.
 - Two of the young people are not in education or employment and others are in college (full and part time).
- 4.5 **The Youth Forum:** A small group of young people from the Youth Forum participated in a discussion of the CYPP. Characteristics of this culturally diverse group are as follows:
- Aged 16-20 and from a wide variety of backgrounds.
 - They are at college or school.
 - One young person is in bed and breakfast accommodation.
 - One young person is not in education, employment or training.

The Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Reflecting the Views of Young People

5.0 The minutes of the meeting are as follows:

- 5.1 Nancy Bukasa and Steven Day, representing Holland Park School, believed there should be a stronger relationship

between young people and society and there should be more focus on enjoying life and having fun. Out of the priorities listed in the plan, they thought that priorities A, B and D should be at the top of the list. They looked forward to seeing the outcomes of the plan over the next few years and noted that the goals were ambitious but could be achieved by hard work and dedication. Steven Day said it was good to get the views from the Council and for the young people's personal voice to be heard.

- 5.2 Elxhan Gashi, representing the Looked After Young People Group, suggested that there should be an added priority to make sure that every child or young person had someone to look after them, to believe in them and direct them to the right path.
 - 5.3 Gina Morgan, representing the Youth Forum, was very impressed that the committee noticed the importance of involving young people with the development of the plan. She suggested that to encourage the achievement of young people, accreditation certificates could be issued as an incentive for volunteer work, which could be shown later on to employers. Gina Morgan also stressed the importance of making sure fun was incorporated in the plan and would like to see more vocational courses offered. She was shocked to see the difference between the north and south of the borough, such as the longer life expectancy of those living in the south, and wondered what the Council would do about it. A lot of young people had said that youth workers had played a big role in their lives and Gina Morgan asked if the role of youth workers could be built into the training for teachers to help improve education for young people.
- 6.0 The Committee was invited to comment on the report and ask the young people questions; the following points were made:
- 6.1 Councillor Lasharie began by welcoming the fact that the meeting was being held outside the Town Hall and in the Muslim Cultural Heritage Centre; he commented on section 4.8 on page 5 and suggested that it should read "most of us" instead of "some of us". He noted that there were no Muslim parents present at the meeting and he thought that more effort should be made to engage parents. He also asked the young people to take the plan to their parents for their comments and views on it, as this would be a way of involving parents through their children. Steven Day replied that it was hard to involve some parents as they were very busy working, but he agreed that they played a large part in young people's lives and should be involved more.

- 6.2 Councillor Coates said that in the medical school in which he was involved a great effort was made to involve young people and he asked how the young people envisaged they could have a greater role in the future in giving feedback to the Council. Nancy Bukasa suggested that more meetings like this one would be beneficial as it was nice to see young people involved and it could help strengthen the relationship between them and the Council.
- 6.3 Councillor Weale commented that she thought the comment about the role of parents was perceptive and was particularly important as it came from young people themselves; she thought the point about youth workers was interesting and, although the Council was not involved in initial teacher training, youth worker skills could be fed into the general training organised by the Council for teachers. She agreed that giving certificates for voluntary work was a good idea and she was glad to hear the comments on the importance of fun.
- 6.4 Reverend Taylor asked for the young people's views on expanding the role of faith and Gina Morgan replied that faith and religion played a big part in mapping out a lot of young people's lives.
- 6.5 Mr Colin Hall, Headteacher of Holland Park School, commended the Council for putting this initiative in place to involve young people and he was impressed by the young people's comments. He took the point about the importance of having vocational courses and said there was an inevitable tension between raising academic standards and what made young people happy, although he agreed that schools needed to be places of fun. He said that other ways of engaging young people with the Council ought to be considered.
- 6.6 Mrs Carrie said it was good to hear the discussion and she would welcome comments from young people about how the Council was doing in implementing the plan and suggestions as to what young people could do, working with the Council, to make the ambitions a reality. The Council needed to regularly hear young people's comments.
- 6.7 Councilor Ritchie thanked the young people for their comments and Jessica Coveney and the other officers, who supported looked after children and the youth forum.

7.0 Council is asked to note the comments of the young people on the CYPP made to the OSC on 14 March 2006.

FOR INFORMATION

**CHAIRMAN: FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Public background papers used in preparation of this report:

None.

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ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON FAMILY AND
CHILDREN'S SERVICES – 14 MARCH 2006**

**REPORT BY A YEAR 10 GROUP AT HOLLAND PARK SCHOOL ON THE
DRAFT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN**

The report offers the views of a group of 24 pupils from Year 10 of Holland Park School on the draft Children and Young People's Plan.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Background

- 1.1 The group have met three times. At the first session, Councillor Husband presented an overview of the Royal Borough's structure and responsibilities. The two subsequent meetings discussed the draft Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).
- 1.2 Kindly note that all reports have been prepared on the basis of the first draft of the CYPP and that the numbering of this version differs from that of the second draft of the CYPP which has been circulated with the agenda pack. For ease of reference the first draft of the CYPP - which all three groups worked on - is attached as Appendix A, with apologies for any confusion this may cause.

2. Comments on *Our Vision for Families and Children* section

- 2.1 The draft plan states-

We want all children and young people to have the best possible start in life:

- *To respect themselves and others, and to engage positively with society*
- *To be enquiring and keen to learn, to help others and to enjoy life*
- *To grow up safely and healthily*
- *To get the extra help they need if they are in difficult circumstances*
- *To have their achievements recognised and built upon*

- *To be prepared for active, economically independent, participative adulthood*

Families living locally have chosen to live in the inner city and face the stresses and strains that go with this. Demand for affordable housing and secondary school places outstrips supply; green space is limited; the city is noisy and busy, and crime is an everyday reality. We want to produce the best possible experience of city life, but certain constraints will always be with us. We expect parents to appreciate the significance of their demanding roles and to recognise that being a parent means making choices and sacrifices.

Strong family networks are the foundation on which strong communities are built. We continue to support parents and carers as the main contributors to their children's safety, success and well-being, and to build strong families at the heart of strong communities. We will help families to find the information and services they need before small concerns become major crises. We will prioritise children with the greatest needs, and those at risk of harm, to ensure their well-being and safety. We aim to be good parents to children and young people in public care.

We are ambitious for the children and young people who live or study in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. We are proud of our high educational standards and we intend to improve children's attainment even further. We want all children to receive excellent teaching, a broad, rich and enjoyable curriculum, the promotion of healthy lifestyles, a positive learning environment and a range of additional support. We recognise the importance and impact that health can have on the lives of children and their parents and carers, and we want to ensure that we promote access to high quality health services in our community.

Many of our services are run with the involvement of parents and carers in a voluntary capacity. Listening to parents, carers, children and young people helps us to offer relevant, efficient, timely and effective family support and we will consult users more on how we shape services. We shall be open with parents and carers about decisions we make and about any steps we take to prevent harm to their children.

We recognise the diversity and differing needs of our population and we are committed to treating everyone fairly and respectfully. We aim for our services to be high quality, easy to access, and provided by skilled staff from the relevant professions working together. Services for adults will work closely with children's services. The Council and members of the Kensington and Chelsea Partnership are pledged to work together to improve the life chances of children and

young people. We will involve voluntary organisations, community and faith groups who support families and children.

This plan sets out the steps we will take to deliver these ambitions.

- 2.2 We all view the vision statement as very ambitious bearing in mind the short timescale involved and some of us see the vision statement as unrealistic. A further criticism is that outcomes are dependant on factors which the Council and their partners cannot influence, for example, growing up healthily is affected by pollution and air quality issues out of the control of local agencies.

3. Comments on the *Goals for 2006-09*

- 3.1 The Goals in the draft plan are-

We have six goals that we want to help local children and young people to achieve over the next three years:

- 1. To respect themselves and others, and engage positively with society*
- 2. To be enquiring and keen to learn and to help others, to enjoy life, and to have their achievements recognised and built upon*
- 3. To grow up safely and healthily*
- 4. To have their achievements recognised and built upon*
- 5. To be prepared for active, economically independent, participative adulthood*
- 6. To get the extra help they need if they are in difficult circumstances*

- 3.2 There is a consensus that Goal 3, growing up safely and healthily, is the most important as without this other goals such as gaining economic independence become impossible.

- 3.3 In achieving these goals, there is a general view that this is a joint responsibility between parents, schools and young people themselves. It is noted that the Plan does not explore the extent to which parents are merely assisted in bringing up children or told what to do. Similarly, there is the question of choice on the part of young people; for example, many fast foods/snacks taste better than foods that are good for us.

4. Comments on the *Priorities in the draft CYPP*

Priorities A to G reflect our commitment to excellent services and to providing opportunities for every child and young person to reach high standards of achievement in all reaches of their lives.

A. We will reduce the number of young people who are involved in crime and disorder as perpetrators

B. We will reduce the number of young people who are victims of crime and disorder

4.1 Most of us see these two priorities as being closely linked. Crimes such as mobile phone theft and other robbery and intimidation offences are often seen as affecting young people in particular but no one in the group has in fact been a victim of crime. However, in a couple of instances unsuccessful attempts had been foiled - 'I kicked him so he ran off'. There is quite a lot of scepticism as to how easily crime can be reduced.

C. We will maintain and raise educational standards, focusing on

- *Maintaining and raising standards at all key stages*
- *Raising boys' achievement*
- *Improving the education and training on offer to 14-19 year olds*

4.2 This is universally seen as a key area. A major concern is that maintaining and raising standards might involve more testing and a higher workload so making schooling more stressful.

4.3 Many agree that girls often work harder than boys giving them an advantage in examinations with a large proportion of marks for course work. However, there is also support for the opinion that traditional exams – a written test at the end of two years of study – could be unfair.

4.4 A variety of views are held about different types of school. Some see Church and Independent schools as divisive, others as entirely a matter of parental choice.

D. We will safeguard our children and young people, with priority on

- *Establishing an effective Local Safeguarding Children Board with partners*

4.5 This needs to be explained so that a member of the public can understand this priority.

E. We will offer healthy choices and high quality health services to children and young people, particularly by

- *Increasing child immunisations*
- *Encouraging people to stop smoking*
- *Improving access to sexual health services*
- *Healthy eating, nutrition and physical activities*

4.6 How far is the Council and partners prepared to go in forcing people to take these steps? There is also a tension between the role of parents and government in bring up children.

F. We will prepare young people for adulthood

4.7 By itself, this priority seems a bit vague. Alternatively, if the entire vision was to be expressed in a simple sentence, this might be a good starting point.

G. We will give extra help for children and young people in difficult circumstances, in particular we will

- *Improving outcomes for every looked after child*
- *Ensuring that families with the greatest need for support are offered services*
- *Developing comprehensive joint child and adolescent mental health services*

Priorities H to K reflect values that are important to the local community. These values have been discussed and agreed by local organisations and community groups, who are represented on the Council, in the Kensington and Chelsea Partnership and in the local Children and Young Peoples Strategic Partnership.

H. We will support parents and carers as the main contributors to their children's safety, success and well-being, and build strong families at the heart of strong communities, by

- *Strengthening the community through voluntary organisations, community and faith groups*
- *Improving public information about services to parents, carers, children and young people*
- *Ensuring that schools and children's centres are effective community resources*

4.8 Some of us feel parents should figure more prominently in the priorities generally. We also discussed the role religious belief played in families, acknowledging a wide range of different beliefs in society.

4.9 There is general agreement that facilities and opportunities for young people need to be given a higher priority.

I. We will enable the participation of children, young people, parents and carers to help us to shape services, with a focus on

- *Extending the active involvement of children and young people in decision-making in the local area*

4.10 We agree, and hope that widespread consultation with young people will continue to inform the priorities of the Council.

J. We will integrate services and processes to improve outcomes for children and young people

K. We will develop a skilled workforce, with relevant professionals working together to deliver high quality services

4.11 These are seen as necessary steps but not end priorities in their own right.

5. Conclusion

We feel priorities A, B D are the most important. The reason these are the most important is because without them it becomes almost impossible to achieve all the other aspirations in the draft Plan.

FOR DISCUSSION

**Councillor James Husband
Chairman**

**Yaseen Ahmed Sidat
Ahsan Ali
Nancy Bukasa
Eleanor Chapman
Tringa Dalladaku
Steven Day
Romina Dedgjonaj
Rasha El-Zein
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ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON FAMILY AND
CHILDREN'S SERVICES – 14 MARCH 2006**

**REPORT BY A GROUP OF LOOKED AFTER YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE
DRAFT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN**

The report offers the views of a small group of care leavers ranging in age from 18 – 20.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. Background

- 1.1 Information about the context of this Children and Young people's Plan and the role of the Family and Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee was given as part of this exercise and young people were encouraged to contribute their views.

2. Thoughts, comments and questions on the *Priorities and Aims for 2006-09*

2.1 Priority A Aim - Provide effective interventions for those at risk of offending

- We hope most of these things are already happening if you are trying to improve things you need to say exactly how you plan to do this.
- Self-esteem is very important and we like the idea about publicising the positive work young people undertake. We don't understand the 'prevent and deter' element.
- How are you going to support the YOT to work successfully? Also this only covers those young people who are referred to the YOT this means you might be missing some young people. It would help if you gave examples.
- When you mention seeking punishments that are likely to stop or reduce offending, shouldn't this be the case already for every punishment?
- How are you going to give extra help for children and young people in difficult circumstances?
- How can the CYPP reduce crime?
- Maybe you could have groups that come together weekly to guide the young people at risk and to talk to them and try and calm them. This support might mean that they are influenced by

the people teaching them and also it would help if they had something to keep them busy.

2.2 **Priority A Aim - Promote positive attitudes through engagement in purposeful activity and programmes of informal social education**

- There needs to be funds to promote positive activities. How are you going to encourage parents to take responsibility for the behaviour of their children?
- What does national standards mean? How will you reduce the number of Looked After Children who become involved in crime?
- The targets don't mean much to us; we would need more information if you want us to comment on them. Why are there so many with 'target to follow'?
- How will you reduce the number of young people who are victims of crime and disorder?

2.3 **Priority B Aim – Reduce the number of young people who are victims of crime and anti-social behaviour**

- How will you prevent young people being victims of crime?
- Don't you do these things already? What does an early intervention strategy actually mean? It would help if you described how it would work.
- How about looking at the areas where crime happens and seeing if they can be changed in any way to make it less easy for people to commit crime.
- This is a difficult thing to do because some of it is about being safety conscious. There should be more Community Support Officers and also more CCTV.

2.4 **Priority C Aim – Improve the education and training on offer to 14-19 year olds**

- We think this needs to happen. One young person explained, 'I have seen a 17 year old using their fingers to count to ten, it is a shame and so I agree with the suggestions here'.

2.5 **Priority C Aim – Raise boys achievements**

- Young people preferred the information in this section because 'it actually said what it was going to do and gave examples.'
- Perhaps another idea would be to link with other schools and encourage them to socialise more with each other. Perhaps have a championship league. This might raise self-esteem and give people a chance to make new friends.
- Why are you focusing on boys and not both?

2.6 **Priority C Aim - Maintain and raise educational standards**

- You should be doing this already. How do you plan to raise attendance? The government should do more about school attendance.
- It is stressful for parents to find a school; this is what one young person has heard. 'Everyone says that the Catholic schools are best and it would be good if all schools were the same because for example someone might say I can't go there because I'm Muslim and I'd have to go to church'. All of the schools should be as good as the Catholic schools. You should find out what the difference is between them and why people say some schools are better than others.
- One young person didn't think schools are working in partnership enough. 'What I have heard is that schools don't call parents when a child misses a day or a lesson so that question is how are you going to improve partnership work? Maybe meet with the parents and the child also rather than just sending letters'.
- How will you maintain and raise the education standards?
- Exactly how are you going to improve the quality of teaching across all key stages, so that teaching is good or better in the majority of lessons?
- How are you going to identify the pupils at risk of underachievement?
- You should provide a better service for students. Especially for students who come to this country at a young age because they are vulnerable to being bullied. Providing extra classes for them may help. One young person said, 'Extra classes helped me.'

2.7 **Priority D Aim - Safeguard our children and young people**

- You need to reword this and put improve or something. You do this already. One young person said 'If I didn't know this already I would be worried that you don't do it already'.
- We are not sure how a local safeguarding board would help so if you are going to set it up you need to provide information about it.
- How do you know if children are really safe?
- School is a safer place than on the street so you should make sure that our children go to school. They should have an adult accompany them on their journey to and from school.

2.8 **Priority E Aim – Encourage people to stop smoking:**

- This is a good thing but how will you do it? Maybe try to change slowly and it might be successful as it is a hard thing to do.
- One young person knew someone who read a book about the consequences of smoking and she stopped smoking, she believed reading that book was a really good idea.
- You should make it easy for people to get that book or make a book for them.

2.9 Priority E Aim – Improve access to sexual health services

- One young person thinks you are doing this well already, 'There is Space KC and Connexions, they are doing well already how would you want to improve it?'
- In school they should definitely have sexual education and be able to give more advice.

2.10 Priority E Aim - We will offer health choice and high quality health services

- The young people thought this section was not easy to understand. How do you plan to make these improvements? What will the person with the job actually do? If it is about making sure that the reminder letters get sent out then that might be a good idea.
- One young person says, 'If the doctor hadn't sent me a letter I wouldn't have known about my child's immunisation so make sure that letters get sent and maybe even phone calls to parents. When you make an appointment to a GP it should be made easier if it is urgent and the doctor isn't there where do you go? If there is somewhere to go people should be told. I rang for my child a couple of times and I was told that the Doctor was not in for more than a week. I know my child had an ear infection so I went to the chemist and the chemist told me to go to the doctor but the GP wasn't there. I have spoken to other people about this and they have had a similar experience'.
- Food in school should be improved and made more vegetarian. People might not like it but it is healthier. Children should have regular check ups and someone should make sure that this happens.

2.11 Priority G - Young people to get extra help if they need it

- This is definitely a good idea because young people should be able to have the help they need. But how are you going to make sure that the ones who need it are getting what they need?

2.12 Priority H Aim - Strengthening the community through voluntary organisations, community and faith groups

- What do you want voluntary organisations and faith groups to do?

2.13 Priority I Aim - To increase the active involvement of children and young people in decision-making in the local area

- Volunteering is a good thing and young people should be encouraged to do this. It is a very good thing to have your view counted and it would be good to have more opportunities to make our own choices about things.

2.14 Priority K: We will develop a skilled workforce, with relevant professionals working together to deliver high quality services

- This is a good thing if you can make it happen. Better services means better outcomes for children and young people; more skilled and knowledgeable so it's a good idea.

2.15 Comments on the Goals in the draft plan

Number 2 - to enjoy life

- One young person said, 'I went to a care leavers' party and the biggest discussion was about money. If you want to go bowling with friends this costs about £9. If that's a quarter of what you get a week then you need to really think about that. There need to be more places organised by the Borough for young people to get together and have fun. They don't have to be totally free but much less than a quarter of your weekly money. That is even educational, it can be like a sport and helpful to young people. If there are activities that take place then you need to let young people know about them. I am already thinking where can I take my three year old child to go to learn a sport or play an instrument but I am sure it will be too expensive. I have a friend who wanted to take her daughter to ballet and that was going to be £40 an hour. You feel bad because this stops your child from taking part in something positive and educational for them.'
- If young people had an interest from a very young age in a sport or an instrument then it may mean that their behaviour when they are older would be different; they may be less likely to just go out in the street.

Number 5

- How can you prepare children for this?

3. Additional General Comments and Questions

- Why (on page 6) have you put in the information about diversity and languages in the report – do you think it is a good thing or not?
- One young person said, 'I have witnessed a fight on the bus between two groups of young people speaking different languages and one group thought that they were talking about the other. Young people who speak different languages can be vulnerable'. Perhaps children, even children born in the UK, should be encouraged to speak another language. So there should be extra classes after school for homework and language because so many parents can't help their children. Maybe there should be homework classes at libraries. If this already exists then you should let people know.

- You really need to improve the public information about services to parents and carers and children so they know what is on offer, one young person said they did not know what was on offer.
- I can see that social services in Kensington and Chelsea do a good job.
- It is totally true that housing affects children and young people. People who have a job to do with housing need to be aware of the needs of young people and how doing their jobs affects them. It is not about comfort it is about necessity.
- Young people need to have the courage to speak up about what is working and what is not working. Give young people a choice, tell them what options there are and allow them to make a choice.
- One young person really agrees with prioritising greatest need 'because Golborne ward area needs support'.

4. Summary of Comments

- We found the priorities interesting and we agreed with them.
- There are a lot of aims and plans but not much information about details. They are very good plans and aims but reading this it feels like a film without an ending
- Shouldn't you be doing a lot of this already?
- What are the changes you have made?
- What was it like before 2006? For example what was done before, what worked and didn't work out?
- Have you got any money for this? Do you have enough money?
- There should be an added priority to make sure that every child or young person has someone to look after them and believe in them and direct them to the right path.
- When it comes to solving it will be a hard thing to do. It is not as easy as it looks. There is not that much information on how to solve it. Even if there is some information it is not enough and needs to be more. Some of the things you are saying are positive and of course everyone would agree but anyone can say that but how are you actually going to do it?
- You have to show people you do what you do. You can't just give information about it. You should explain better how you are going to do things; perhaps you need to rewrite it to make it easier to understand.
- You should say if it is something new that you are going to do. We have heard a lot of this is happening already we believe that people are already trying to do this but how are you going to improve it?

FOR DISCUSSION

**Jessica Coveney
Advocacy and Listening to Children Officer**

**Natasha
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ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON FAMILY AND
CHILDREN'S SERVICES – 14 MARCH 2006

REPORT BY THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
YOUTH FORUM ON THE DRAFT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S
PLAN

The report offers the views of a group of 5 members of the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea Youth Forum.

FOR DISCUSSION

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 The group met once and has decided to give feedback via a report in bullet point form. This is included in the summary below.

2. Comments on the section *Our Vision for Families and Children*

- The beginning was structured and it was made clear about the aims the Council had in mind; however we are quite confused about the way the Council is going about ensuring children have a healthy lifestyle and have a proper education. We were just wondering how you are going to ensure your plans come into effect.
- We feel the time you have given yourself could be quite unrealistic.
- How can you ensure you get round to every single family with children in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and make sure each and every one of them is getting adequate support.
- How will you recognise a genuine problem even when a family refuses to admit that there is one?
- However you have covered a lot of ground and have thought of the main key aspects that children need in the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

- You've said 'We will prioritise children with the greatest needs and those at risk of harm' what happens to those who don't come into this category? Do they get forgotten?

3. Comments on the section *Who are the Children and Young people of Kensington and Chelsea?*

We feel that that your statistics could be updated.

4. Comments on the section *Promoting Equality and Respecting Diversity*

We found it very encouraging from looking at the statistics and your aims that you are committed to taking an active part in the society and using people's differences to strengthen that society, its brilliant that we have such a great diversity in our community that you are aiming to strengthen further and you have pointed that out really well.

5. Comments on the section *Health and Wellbeing*

It's good to know that our borough is doing surprisingly better healthwise in comparison to the rest of the country. However its alarming to know that living in north Kensington as apposed to living in any other part of the borough can have such a dramatic effect on your health and wellbeing.

6. Comments on the section *Schools and Education*

The worrying thing we uncovered is as a result of the shortage of secondary schools within the borough, 51% of school-aged children are educated in independent schools. Therefore we feel that some serious planning should be arranged as to tackle the problem of a shortage of secondary schools in the Royal Borough.

The results you have provided about students G.C.S.E results were pleasing, as it was compared to the national average and it was higher.

Priority should be given to residents of the Royal Borough within its limited secondary schools.

7. Comments on the section *Social Care*

We're pleased that your overall intention is to try and strengthen the bonds between parents and children, however we as young people have examples where we feel that this isn't the right option

and we also feel that the support isn't necessarily adequate for young people who are in the care system or struggling with relationships at home.

8. Comments on the section *What we want to achieve for local children and young people:*

8.1 Comments on Section 6.2.1

Having reached the Advanced Level of the Hear By Right Standard, as a Youth Forum we've been consulted on numerous occasions about a vast range of issues such as schools, education, youth provisions, parks in the borough, community strategy, crime, ASBO's and designing of new developments. As a youth forum we value the opportunity to be consulted with, by past consultations we've automatically been taken into consideration when you're looking at the needs and priorities of young people in the Royal Borough.

8.2 Comments on Section 6.2.2, Priority A

You stated that you will 'encourage parents to take responsibility for the behaviour of their children,' however some offenders may not live with their parents.

How are you actually going to ensure parents do take responsibility for their children? What kind of methods will you adopt?

The initiatives/aims should be more specific-how are you going to particularly target those young people most at risk?

Our experiences have shown that Anti-social behaviour orders in some cases do not actually work, as they tend to criminalise young people. Have you researched any other alternatives that have proved successful in other areas?

Throughout your plan you have not given any detail on the actions you are going to take.

Youth offending programmes in schools have shown not to be affective in deterring youth offending but has been used as a positive thing for free trips and special treatment.

Put young people in control of their learning. Take disruptive pupils out of the group environment and only allow them to mix with other students when work is completed and bad behaviour is reversed.

8.3 Comments on Section 6.2.2, Priority B

Role play and performances for young people are essential in teaching them how to combat crime. It'll show different scenarios and advice on how to not to be a target of crime e.g. not to leave your phone on show, or your money etc.

8.4 Comments on Section 6.2.2, Priority C

You need to have a higher target rate for the achieved accredited outcome, 120 is simply not enough.

Need more vocational courses, perhaps introduce them at a lower age, as most young people prefer a more practical route after secondary school.

Take some examples from other European countries for example Germany, where vocational education is as valued as academic.

We have the feeling, that students that want to learn are held back by pupils who are disruptive, what needs to be changed is to be able to cater for everybody's different learning styles. The classes are too big; we feel that teachers need extra support.

It's good that you want to address the problem with boys' under-achieving we'd just like to add, don't forget about the girls.

During teachers training, teachers should get advice on how to tackle disruptive behaviour and how to communicate with young people. Involve youth workers as in elements of teacher training.

8.5 Comments on Section 6.2.2, Priority D

We agree with everything in this section.

8.6 Comments on Section 6.2.2, Priority E

We agree whole-heartedly with all the healthy eating initiatives in this section. However we think swimming should be re-introduced as compulsory.

8.7 Comments on Section 6.2.2, Priority F

We agree with the majority of this section, however we feel that the youth support and development service is often undervalued and all of us involved in this project have come through the youth service, we need to emphasise the opportunities to have FUN. For instance

residential, international exchanges, global youth work, and events that fit into the 6 key goals for EVERY CHILD MATTERS.

8.8 Comments on Section 6.2.2, Priority G

Everything in this section we agreed with.

8.9 Comments on Section 6.2.2, Priority H

Have any of the 4 intended Children's Centres opened yet, as they were all set to open by March 2006?

It's good that pupils and families are going to be included in developing extended services.

Overall we feel that the aims put forward are pleasing and the initiatives cover all areas to promote positive involvement from parents, careers and families as whole units to strengthen local communities.

8.10 Comments on Section 6.2.2, Priority I

How are you going to implement the Hear by Right Standard, extension to 5-13 year olds? Where will they be situated?

How will you encourage young people to become volunteers? Will you provide any incentives for their involvement?

Agreeing a joint strategy for consultation across the children's and young people strategic partnership will make it easier for children and young people to take part in many consultations and strengthen the creation of services primarily moulded by them.

You have clearly noticed the importance of young peoples' involvement via volunteering to help shape services.

8.11 Comments on Section 6.2.2, Priority J

The integration of services is an excellent aim, as it will be useful to all young people and children. It will give them easy access to services that are essential to their needs.

8.12 Comments on Section 6.2.2, Priority K

It's excellent that you are going to involve families, children and young people in work force elements.

Very well detailed and structured. Your points came across very clearly.

For instance:

- 'to analyse the current & potential work force against demographic and diversity issues.'
- 'To identify a change management programme that will take account of both cultural and structural issues, and ensure resources are utilised to reform the work force and support people through change'.
- 'Engagement with universities, colleges, training providers and other local organisations such as NHS/PCT and the Learning & Skills Council'.

9. Summary

Our 10 main points for presentation:

- It's excellent that you have noticed and so built into your incentives the importance of involving children, young people, parents, careers and families in consultations to shape the services that they use.
- A main concern of ours was the lack of secondary schools within the borough noticeably there is only one non-secular mixed school. Due to this we feel that residents of the Royal Borough should have priority in gaining places at the existing schools, namely Holland Park, above applicants from other boroughs.
- It's encouraging that as a borough we top many tables with regards to health and education however it is very alarming that there is still a divide between the north and south of the Royal Borough and wonder how this divide is going to be addressed.
- We feel that the youth service is undervalued. And feel that more emphasis should be made on what the youth service already does to support the goals laid out in the plan. And also feel that the training within youth services for youth workers could be useful within the training for teachers to combat some of the issues laid out within education (teacher training, combating disruptive pupils in classes)
- We understand the problem anti-social behaviour presents within local communities we feel that there should be more investigation into alternatives to punishing young people with ASBO's that tend to do more to criminalise young people as opposed to leading them towards reform.
- Young people are a great and often unused workforce. Involving young people through volunteering is and excellent idea we

wonder what, if any, incentives will be provided for young people who volunteer either via accreditation or vouchers. Goal 2 - Recognise achievements.

- The Royal Borough that we live in is rich in diversity and throughout the report it is clear that you recognise this and are keen to build upon it to achieve the goal of establishing a stronger community.
- We noticed that the goals lined out were clearly in the interest of children however there was no mention of FUN. Which made us question where the play service came into the plan? Is it at all on your agenda that children and young people are to enjoy being involved in the incentives and projects outlined and have fun at the same time?
- Not all young people are academically inclined. Many young people achieve more through vocational courses but even so at GCSE level there are few or no vocational routes for them to take which often leaves them with low achievement to take them into post 16 education. This is a very big disadvantage as achievement in education ultimately maps your future. More attention should be paid to providing and publicising vocational courses post 16 to encourage young people to stay within education and achieve through their talents.
- The 6 goals reflect the main issues that affect young people and cover all areas of life and personal growth.

FOR DISCUSSION

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