

**THE ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA
FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 4
MAY 2011**

MINI-GROUP ON SCHOOLS, QUALITY AND STANDARDS

**TUESDAY 12 APRIL AT 6.30PM IN COMMITTEE ROOM 2,
KENSINGTON TOWN HALL**

Present: Councillor Professor Sir Anthony Coates, John O'Donnell and Kathleen Williams

Officers: Joanne Hay, Rebecca Matthews, Charles Franklyn

NOTES

1 Apologies for absence: Councillor Robert Atkinson, Kieran Parsons

2 Mini-Group Procedure Note

Noted

3 Towards a New Form of Public Services-Oral Report from Ms Joanne Hay, Director of Policy and Performance

Shift from a period of growth and investment to cut backs and a sense that public services need to find new ways to tackle intractable social problems. Alongside this Government is reforming public services by devolving power to local areas and encouraging involvement of citizens, communities and independent providers so they can play a greater role in developing services. The forthcoming Public Services Reform White Paper places particular emphasis on: extending innovative payment and funding mechanisms; developing new rights for communities and employees to buy and run public services; and increasing the role of the third sector.

Options could include: -

- Devolving power to citizens and local charities – RBKC is working with the K & C Social Council and others to explore this.
- Pooling resources – through, e.g. Community Budgets
- Shared services – e.g. Tri-Borough

- Employee spin-out – Youth service staff are planning to set up a new social enterprise run as an employee led mutual. They are one of 12 Cabinet Office pathfinders.
- Increasing third sector engagement – this includes a range of organisations such as charities and social enterprises. An example of a local social enterprise is Bikeworks
- External investment (e.g philanthropy, social impact bonds, joint ventures) – The Borough’s FocusKC charity seeks funds from wealthy residents to support local causes and enterprises
- Citizen involvement e.g. residents running libraries – no plans in RBKC
- Capability building with the local third sector – K & C Social Council has set up an umbrella organisation to support small organisations which do not have the structure to manage their administration and otherwise cannot undertake such contracts
- Demand management, e.g placing a greater emphasis on early intervention and prevention – Chairman says this is very important and must remain a priority. Graham Allen report focuses on evidence-based intervention. Scrutiny Committee to be encouraged to keep this as a priority.

4 Extract from Finance and Priorities Sub-Group Report

- Early Years (6.3) – Different provision in neighbouring Boroughs. General Sure Start fund is reducing so we need to review what we are doing and for whom.
 - Chairman suggested that Children’s Centres could be better linked in with schools. NB they have different funding streams.
 - All agreed that Heads have a vested interest in Early Years provision and that problems with young children can be translated into problems at school later on.
 - Chairman requested that Heads be asked their views about Children’s Centres and how they can be better linked with schools.
- Early Years Outreach (6.4) – This is a key way to reach vulnerable families. Cuts may be proposed. All agree that Scrutiny Committee should resist these cuts at all costs.
- Review of Special Educational Needs (6.7; 6.8) – Mr O’Donnell is very concerned at changes. If budgets are personalised families may not have information about how best to spend the money.
 - Ms Matthews said the Council is seeking to reduce the number of out of Borough placements which are very costly. The presumption will be that any new schools built in the borough will have SEN places if physically possible, and other places are being sought in-Borough.
- PRU – The need for a better site was noted. H & F have a very good PRU which could be a model for alternative provision.

- Isaac Newton PDC – This is included in the property review of the Westway area and various options are under consideration.
 - Heads value the facility greatly and so do not wish to lose it. Mrs Williams said she attended many meetings and conferences in hotels which could be held at lower cost in the PDC. The Chairman said the PDC was another possible candidate for a cooperative.

5 School Funding Changes and Pressures – Report from Ms Rebecca Matthews, Director of Schools Quality and Standards

- The Education Bill suggests that local authorities will retain some residuary functions (e.g. school improvement for those schools causing concern, SEN, exclusions and behaviour, and admissions) but most budgets will go straight to schools.
- Tri-Borough arrangements will enable these residuary functions to be provided more effectively.
- Local authorities will be able to provide other services on a charged basis, possibly as some sort of joint venture or alternative delivery model.
- Local schools are very concerned at possible reductions in quality of services being offered. Heads wish to be involved in how these services are provided.
- Heads want details of services on offer before signing up, but details cannot always be provided until the number of participating schools is known. There is no compulsion on schools to cooperate in purchasing services.
- Much concern that local knowledge about schools and the community will be lost in headlong rush to change, and many good staff have already been lost due to budget constraints and the uncertainty. RM says that heads need to be reassured that key advisors, with local knowledge will be available in future.
- Mrs Williams would like a careful analysis of the DSG.
- “SchoolCo”- i.e. some kind of a cooperative structure with RBKC in support
 - i. Next meeting will discuss what value this might have.
 - ii. Mrs Williams to discuss with other Heads
 - iii. Concentrate on Schools Improvement in the first instance
 - iv. Ms Matthews cautioned against making ambitious plans since budget restraints have meant that many good staff have already left. She also emphasised the direction of travel proposed by the government. She proposed trying to maintain a core group with skills, local knowledge and

expertise and building from this as resources and demand allow.

- v. If the model was viable it could be offered to neighbouring Boroughs.
- Mr O'Donnell wondered how the Local Authority would pick up that a school was heading for problems. Chairman suggested that Heads (via Mrs Williams) and the Council (via Ms Matthews) might consider this.

6 Date of Next Meeting

- Mr Quinn will canvass members and circulate the date. Other members including Cabinet Members will be encouraged to attend, and all members will be sent copies of these notes.

13-Apr-11
CAF

19.4.11
IQ