

## ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

### SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

9 MARCH 2011

#### JOINT REPORT BY THE CABINET MEMBER FOR FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND THE CABINET MEMBER FOR EDUCATION AND LIBRARIES

#### REPORT ON CURRENT ISSUES

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of recent policy and practice developments which are likely to impact on the future work of the Business Group and to update Members on progress of important current projects.

**FOR INFORMATION**

#### **1. BACKGROUND**

- 1.1 Scrutiny Committee Members have requested regular updates on important projects and local or national Family and Children's Service (FCS) developments.

#### **2. YOUTH FORUM DEVELOPMENTS**

- 2.1 The Youth Support and Development Service is taking the opportunity afforded by the Employee Led Mutuals Pathfinder to assist young people to develop business skills. The Royal Borough's Youth Forum, drawn from local schools and youth centres, is receiving specialist training in the mechanics of establishing and operating a business. The Youth Forum will form a trading company designed to provide resident/consumer consultation services and training services. Profits from the business will be reinvested in the company to support youth participation and citizenship programmes in the Royal Borough. So far this year £7,500 has been raised by the Youth Forum through the provision of consultation expertise.

#### **3. HEAR BY RIGHT ADVANCED LEVEL FOR CHILDREN**

- 3.1 Hear by Right is a standards framework, developed by the National Youth Agency, for organisations across statutory and voluntary sectors to assess the active involvement of children and young people. It uses measurable standards to assess the level of young people's participation across services and the strategic commitment to further develop this.

- 3.2 At the end of 2010 the Royal Borough was assessed for the 'advanced' level of the standard for its work with children aged under 13. Subject to the final report, the assessor has indicated the Council will be awarded with the advanced level status: this will make the Royal Borough the first organisation in England to achieve the advanced status for children. This is a remarkable achievement, considering that the standard was written for older children, which the Borough can build on in the future.
- 3.3 The assessor was particularly impressed with the commitment of the Children's Participation Team and their rigorous approach to participation. Specific projects highlighted as exemplary were the recent 'Never Too Young' training delivered to Third Sector colleagues and the Children's Forum library project.

#### **4. SCHOOL SUPPORT STAFF UPDATE**

- 4.1 The recently published Schools White Paper "The Importance of Teaching" sets out a clear coalition agenda sharply focused on the teaching body rather than the wider workforce. Aligned with this was the recent abolition of the School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB) which had been tasked by the previous Government to establish National pay and conditions for support staff working in schools.
- 4.2 The decision to abolish the SSSNB means that school support staff will continue to have their pay and conditions determined in accordance with existing arrangements with decisions taken at a local level.
- 4.3 The Royal Borough is committed to recruiting and developing a knowledgeable and skilled support staff body who understand their role, are clearly focused on school and pupils outcomes and have high quality professional development, career guidance and performance management. The Borough has always demonstrated its belief in fair play as well as professional accountability. To this end, a source of advice and guidance for school leadership teams was published by the Borough in 2006 (referred to as the "Green Binder for Support Staff"). The Green Binder for Support Staff comprised Job Descriptions, pay guidance, advice around deployment and also introduced "competences" for schools to use to develop their support staff and hold them accountable. A working party of Head teachers, Local Authority Officers, HR professionals and Support staff unions were responsible for the Green Binder and the result stood the test of time.
- 4.4 Five years on, the Green Binder is being reviewed and updated in order to be more flexible (for example, schools will be easily able to customise Job Descriptions), more accessible (on the Royal Borough's website) and aligned with National Occupational Standards (these are clear statements of good practice and they underpin support staff qualifications) in place of locally devised competences.
- 4.5 Forty-nine percent of our school workforce are support staff members. They are highly valued by school leaders and they impact on school

standards as well as the workload of teaching professionals. We have Teaching Assistants, Special Needs Assistants, Nursery Officers, Higher Level Teaching Assistants, Sports Coaches, Data Managers, Attendance Officers, Finance Officers, Learning Mentors, Senior Admin Officers, Bursars, School Business Managers, Site Managers, Caretakers, and so on. We also have support staff leaders who manage groups of staff and are often on the Leadership Team in many of our schools. With such investment it is essential that our schools can draw upon up-to-date advice and guidance to recruit, develop, deploy and reward our support staff. The revised "Green Binder" will roll out onto the Royal Borough's website starting in February 2011 with a Professional Framework for Class Based Support Staff. Professional Frameworks for Administration and Finance staff, for Care and Guidance Support Staff and for Site Support Staff will follow soon afterwards.

## **5. LATIMER EDUCATION CENTRE OFSTED INSPECTION**

- 5.1 Latimer Education Centre was inspected on the 19 January and found by Ofsted to be a satisfactory pupil referral unit. Ofsted noted the progress the school had made following a period of turbulence associated with staff changes, including changes at a senior level. It found it had satisfactory capacity to improve with the management committee becoming increasingly effective in forging more productive links with local schools.
- 5.2 Ofsted noted improvements over the past year had been driven by effective self-evaluation. They found leaders recognised the need to prioritise the outcomes of self-evaluation in order to concentrate upon the few most important developments that will make the greatest difference to the quality of outcomes for students.
- 5.3 Ofsted found the curriculum to focus appropriately on developing students' key skills, enabling them to pursue accredited courses, such as GCSE, BTEC and entry level certificates. Achievement was found to be satisfactory, with no significant differences between the performances of different groups of students, including those with a statement of special educational needs and college-based students. However, not all students put themselves in the best position to learn. Despite individual improvements, attendance overall is low but improving. Furthermore, students travel independently and often arrive late.
- 5.4 Actions highlighted to improve the school further included: Making the most of available teaching by improving students' attendance, punctuality and clarifying expectations of behaviour at the start of each school day; and raising the expectation that the unit will return students into mainstream school in the shortest possible time by promoting independent learning, establishing the principle that placement at the PRU is only a short term measure with students and parents, strengthening local partnership working with schools, and devising exist strategies and plans for students shortly after admission.

## **6. CHILDREN'S HOME INSPECTIONS**

- 6.1 The Royal Borough's residential children's homes were both subject to independent unannounced inspections by Ofsted in the week beginning the 7 February 2011. The inspection's focus was to follow up on the previous full inspections that occurred approximately six months ago and to specifically focus upon safeguarding practices within the homes.
- 6.2 The inspection of Whistler Walk confirmed its current outstanding status. St. Marks is currently rated as outstanding for safeguarding but good overall; the inspectors of St Marks felt there is no reason as to why outstanding status would not be granted at the next full inspection.
- 6.3 Praise was given to robust management and leadership along with findings of evidence of a continuous drive to ensure service improvements that ensures the safety and wellbeing of children and young people in placement.

## **7. ST QUINTIN CENTRE FOR DISABLED CHILDREN INSPECTION**

- 7.1 St Quintin Centre for Disabled Children and Young People is a specialist resource centre for disabled children and their families providing day care, and activities after school, Saturdays and during the school holidays. It also provides advice support and signposting for parents, and is open for use by families on Sundays.
- 7.2 The centre is one of the first of its kind in the country and had attracted lots of interest from other boroughs wishing to develop its services for disabled children, and is seen as an example of innovative best practice.
- 7.3 The centre caters from children from birth to eighteen years of age. It therefore requires to be registered with Ofsted for the under 8s. Ofsted visited St Quintin at the end of 2010 and rated the quality of provision as good. The centre has only been open since February 2010 and it is almost unheard of to receive an 'outstanding' on first inspection, but this remains the aim of the centre manager.
- 7.4 Ofsted noted that "children are consistently smiling and interacting in a positive manner in this child-centred environment for children with disabilities. They are effectively supported and kept safe by a caring staff team. Children are enthusiastic as they play with a good range of play materials which ensures their progress in all areas of learning. Staff are well organised and have a competent understanding of the Early Years Foundation Stage. They consistently encourage parents to be actively involved in all aspects of their children's care and education. Well-written policies and procedures securely underpin the centre practice and are made readily available for all parents."
- 7.5 To further improve the early years provision Ofsted recommended: ensuring that a daily record of the names of the children looked after on the premises, their hours of attendance and the full names of the

children's key workers is recorded and the centre develops a record of observations to plan more effectively for the next steps of children's play, learning and development.

## **8. STRONGER FAMILIES – EARLY INTERVENTION AND HIGH NEEDS PROJECTS**

- 8.1 Work has now commenced on the Early Intervention and High Needs Projects as part of the Stronger Families change programme. The project will be delivered through targeted activities within a 15 week period from 31 January to 30 April 2011. The overall aim of the project is to provide priorities based on local needs to be used to re-design early intervention and high needs services in the most cost effective way.
- 8.2 The work falls into four stages - information gathering, analysis and developing re-design options, engagement on re-design options, and finalising the re-design approach (to be completed by the end of April).
- 8.3 The project is currently in the 'information gathering stage' which involves:
- cost and activity analysis of our current early intervention and high needs work so we know what we do, how much it costs and what resources we deliver it with;
  - analysing the outcomes we achieve for individual clients, for high risk groups and for the whole child population (so we know what we achieve with the money we spend);
  - mapping key processes so we understand properly how decisions are made and who is involved in them;
  - finding out from staff what they think works and gathering case studies to show the difference early intervention has made;
  - looking at what works elsewhere; examples of best practice and evidence from research projects/programme evaluations; and
  - using data we already have on the needs of children, young people and families in the borough.

## **9. REDUCTION IN FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES SICKNESS**

- 9.1 The number of days lost to sickness in Family and Children's Services (over a twelve month period) is over 2000 days lower than last year. In the twelve month period preceding December 2010 the number of days lost to sickness was 6213 days; this is 2194 days less than in the twelve month period preceding December 2009 (8407).
- 9.2 Reduced sickness in the Community Learning Directorate has significantly contributed to the overall FCS reduction. Sickness in Community Learning has fallen by over 60 percent in the past three years to current average of 7.98 days per employee, below the Council average of 8.18.

- 9.3 Almost half of sickness absence in FCS is attributable to long-term illnesses. The most common reasons for long term sickness include mental health disorders, serious illness and surgery and post-surgery recovery.

## **10. NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS**

### **10.1 National Curriculum Review (call for evidence)**

The government wishes to hear views on all aspects of the issues being considered in the first phase of the National Curriculum Review and the evidence to support these views.

### **10.2 Healthy Lives, Healthy Futures: Our Strategy for Public Health in England (White Paper)**

The government's Public Health White Paper sets out its plans for structural changes to the delivery of public health services. Key measures include: the establishment of a new national health service – Public Health England – with a ring-fenced public health budget; for local authorities to lead on public health locally with ring-fenced health budgets from April 2013; and a public health outcomes framework. The consultation on the White Paper has been extended to the 31 March. Scrutiny Committee members are invited to contribute to the Council's submission.

### **10.3 Bailey Review on the Commercialisation and Sexualisation of Childhood**

Reg Bailey, Chief Executive of the Mothers' Union, is carrying out an Independent Review to address parents' concerns about the pressures on children to grow up too quickly.

## **11. KEY DECISIONS**

### **11.1 Award of SP Contract for Young People Accommodation-based Service ( 03342/10/H/B)**

The Cabinet Member is asked to agree the award of Supporting People contract for St Christopher's Fellowship for young people accommodation-based service (medium support). This is will have a Part B confidential appendix.

### **11.2 Family and Children's Services (excluding Library Services) charges for 2011/12 (03454/11/S/A)**

To seek approval for revised fees and charges for Family and Children's Services (excluding the Library Service) in 2011/12. This will be a joint decision with the Cabinet Member for Education and Libraries

### **11.3 Health and Social Care qualifications training contract award (03507/11/A/A)**

To agree the award of contracts for health and social care qualifications training. There will be a part B (confidential) appendix to this report. This

will be a joint decision with the Cabinet Member for Family and Children's Services.

**11.4 Proposed Admissions Arrangements to Primary and Secondary Schools in the Royal Borough 2012-13 (03483/11/E/A)**

The eight week public consultation on admission arrangements for community school concludes on 1 March 2011. The arrangements must be determined and be sent to the DfE by the mandatory deadline of 15 April 2011.

**11.5 Play Service Fees and Charges (03495/11/S/A)**

To determine the level of fees and charges within the Play Service from July 2011

**FOR INFORMATION**

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