

ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

22 NOVEMBER 2010

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 developments.

2. KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA SCHOOLS TOP LEAGUE TABLES

- 2.1 On 21 October the DfE released information about the 2010 GCSE results nationally. The results place Kensington and Chelsea at the top nationally for the percentage of pupils gaining five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C and five GCSEs at grades A*-C including English and mathematics.
- 2.2 The combined results of schools in Kensington and Chelsea achieved 92 percent of pupils achieving five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C compared with 76% nationally for maintained schools. Seventy-one percent of pupils achieved five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C with English and mathematics, compared with only 55% nationally for maintained schools.

3. OFSTED REPORT

- 3.1 Kensington and Chelsea children's services has been highlighted in the Ofsted report 'Improving outcomes for children and young people through partnership in Children's Trusts'.
- 3.2 The report is the result of a small-scale survey conducted by Ofsted to evaluate the impact of Children's Trusts on improving the lives of children and young people, and particularly those whose circumstances make them potentially vulnerable. Inspectors visited six local authorities, of which one was Kensington and Chelsea, during the autumn of 2009 and spring of

2010 and held initial discussions with members of the Children's Trusts in those areas.

- 3.3 Key features of good practice identified in Kensington and Chelsea included a history of strong partnership working at a strategic level and highly effective leadership by directors of children's services and lead members. Children and Young People's Plans were clear, focused and designed to have an impact on outcomes. There was a determined commitment to early intervention and prevention, as well as evidence of services being redesigned around the needs of children and their families. There was also a range of integrated services in which professionals were clear about the benefits of joint working.
- 3.4 The report in particular highlighted Kensington and Chelsea's work raising the aspirations and wellbeing of teenage parents. Ofsted stated that senior managers of services contributing to the Teenage Pregnancy strategy considered that the Children's Trust had 'brought a maturity to integrated working because partners better understand the wider agenda. A quote from one young mother was included in the report: "I'm the result of this project at its best. I've qualified as a youth worker and now work part-time. I love it – it's turned my life around. Tell them that!"
- 3.5 A copy of the full report can be accessed from the [Ofsted website](#).

4. APPOINTMENT OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

- 4.1 Ms Libby Blake has been appointed Executive Director of Family and Children's Services following Anne Marie Carrie's departure on 9 November. Ms Blake is currently Deputy Executive Director.
- 4.2 Ms Blake will be leading the business group through a demanding period where the council will look to see how it can collaborate with its neighbouring local authorities and work on its medium term service and financial planning.
- 4.3 Arrangements to cover Ms Blake's current responsibilities will be confirmed in due course.

5. EMPLOYEE LED MUTUAL PATHFINDER UPDATE

- 5.1 The Royal Borough has signed up to the Cabinet Office Employee Mutuals Pathfinder project. The focus for the Pathfinder will be youth support services as operated by the Youth Support and Development Service (YSDS). The purpose of the Pathfinder is to examine a range of options for the delivery of youth support services that will ensure high quality delivery at less cost to the Council. The range of options under consideration includes a youth support service that is fully independent of the Council under a social enterprise structure. Initial planning is underway and staff, Members and unions will be fully consulted before a decision is made. This

project places the Royal Borough in the forefront of thinking in relation to new models of public sector delivery.

- 5.2 There are legally defined organisational forms that are often associated with mutuals and cooperatives, for example, Industrial and Provident Societies. The work Cabinet Office is leading to support employee led mutuals is not using strict legal definitions. The key principle is that employees have a greater stake in the ownership and governance of the organisation they work for. This could be achieved by anything from wholly employee-owned organisations; joint ventures with private or third sector; or employees having a strong voice in the governance and running of the organisation. A wide variety of legal forms could develop, including *not for profit* and *for profit* organisations e.g. community interest companies, charities and charitable trusts, as well as employee-owned private businesses and partnerships.

6. EARLY INTERVENTION IN EARLY YEARS

- 6.1 The Family Outreach Team is working with schools and Family Services to meet the needs of the most disadvantaged families. For example, referrals are being made more frequently to support young mothers living with their children at Andrew Proven House. These are often isolated and vulnerable families with particular emotional and social difficulties. The Family Outreach workers employ their solution focused, practical packages of support to help improve parents' management of their children and are signposting them to children's centre services in the locality. Analysis of outcomes indicate that the parents who have been referred for this tailored input have developed more confidence and are better able to interact with their children and with other parents at the centre.
- 6.2 Work has also begun with schools to support parents with children in nursery classes. The nursery teachers in Avondale Park School, for example, have referred parents whose children are experiencing difficulties with toileting and sleeping. The Family Outreach workers have helped ensure that these children are now making good progress in attending regularly and feel a lot more confident in interacting with other children.

7. MIDWIFERY SERVICES IN KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA CHILDREN'S CENTRES

- 7.1 The Early Years Service commissions very focused services from the Imperial Hospital Trust to support parents in the earliest stages of pregnancy and parenthood. These services, delivered through children's centres, are reaching the most disadvantaged families in the borough and ensuring that the national indicators for health are achieved. Services are being delivered at centres, north and south alternately, on Saturdays and this is helping working parents access services they may be unable to attend during the week. Plans are also in place to offer immunisations on Saturdays as this is an important part of supporting early intervention and health and well-being.

- 7.2 There are three Ante-natal Clinics based in the children's centres in North Kensington. Women are offered the option to be seen by the same midwife all through her pregnancy at a venue within 15-20 minutes' walk from her place of residence. The clinic sessions are open from 08.00-18.30 to allow and encourage fathers to attend with their partners. Each appointment time slot is approximately thirty minutes, allowing parents time to discuss plans for the birth and to voice any concerns they may have. All public health targets are also covered during the visits including information on child care and parenting. During the clinic there is also a health visitor present to see each couple to inform them of the health visitor's role.
- 7.3 Ante-natal classes enable parents to make an informed choice of care and help present birthing options available to them. The classes are on Saturdays as this is more convenient for most couples. The classes are called New Beginnings and have a focus on first-time parents. The sessions are for a longer period of time where there is much more focus on parenting. Topics included are communication with your baby, childcare and there is a session for fathers.
- 7.4 Each children's centre now has a breastfeeding café where new mothers can come and meet other mothers and receive advice and support for breast feeding.
- 7.5 Birth Stories are debriefing sessions where mothers can discuss their birth experience with new mothers in an informal setting. The sessions are facilitated by a midwife and a health visitor.
- 7.6 Talking times is an eight-week course facilitated by a midwife and health visitor for women suffering peri-natal depression. The health visitor and midwife work closely with the mental health services and attend referral meetings on a regular basis.
- 7.7 Get Back in Shape is a post-natal exercise group for new mothers wanting to get fit after the birth of their baby. The maternity support worker is at hand for breastfeeding advice and support, and all women are seen by the midwife on the first attendance.

8. INSPIRE ME PROJECT

- 8.1 Over the course of three months, ten young Looked After (LAC) young women from Kensington and Chelsea participated in group work sessions based around personal development through the Inspire Me Programme run at St Marks Children's Home.
- 8.2 The sessions covered topics such as health, self-esteem, relationships, careers and motherhood. External organisations were invited to co-deliver sessions in order to highlight to the young women services and resources that are available for them to access and get support from.

- 8.3 This successful course culminated in a presentation evening, hosted by the Mayor, which acknowledged the young women's achievements'.

9. MID YEAR REPORT ON ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE SERVICES

- 9.1 The Adoption and Children Act 2002 requires Members to be regularly informed about the work of the Adoption and Permanence Team. Appendix A of this report includes a half-yearly report to Members on the work of the Adoption and Permanence Team and highlights the numbers of children waiting for an adoptive home.

10. AIMING HIGH FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

- 10.1 Kensington and Chelsea has been advised by Together For Disabled Children that it has achieved the 'full service offer' for short breaks for disabled children. Kensington and Chelsea is the second local authority, bar the pathfinder councils, nationally to achieve the full service offer.
- 10.2 The full service offer for short breaks aims to ensure that investment made in short breaks results in changes that not only transform the volume of provision available, but also transform the quality, appropriateness, range, and capacity of provision to meet the needs of those eligible children and young people who are commonly unable to access provision.

11. OFSTED MONITORING VISIT OF COLVILLE PRIMARY

- 11.1 On 6 October 2010, Colville Primary School received a no-notice progress monitoring visit from Ofsted. Under the current Ofsted framework, 40 percent of schools receiving a judgement of "satisfactory" overall effectiveness in their previous full inspection will be revisited, within twelve to eighteen months, so that their progress in addressing the key improvement issues and in continuing to promote effectively the outcomes from the Every Child Matters agenda can be scrutinised.
- 11.2 During Colville's monitoring visit, undertaken by one of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), pupils were found to be making accelerated progress leading to much improved attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils were also found to enjoy being at school, to feel safe and to behave well. In respect of the development issues identified in the previous report, improvements in the teaching of writing and in the systems for tracking pupil progress and holding teachers to account were particularly noted, along with the school's strengthened governance and the robust approach now being taken to improving attendance.
- 11.3 The post-monitoring visit letter also commented on the robust challenge provided by the local authority and the quality of monitoring and scrutiny undertaken by those officers involved in working with the school. As a result of the HMI's scrutiny, the school was judged to have made "good"

progress in making improvements and "good" progress in demonstrating a better capacity for sustained improvement. As this was the Royal Borough's first experience of a monitoring visit in respect of a "satisfactory" school, details of the process will be shared with other schools likely to receive one, in order that they can be more fully prepared.

12. EVENTS AND VISITS

12.1 Launch of Public Library Online

Best selling author William Boyd helped launch the Public Library Online digital library service at Kensington Central Library on the 27 September. William Boyd talked to visitors about why he is participating in the library's digital service and read from the digital edition of his best selling novel Restless.

Downloading and viewing eBooks online using personal devices like eReaders and internet-enabled devices is increasingly popular with all age groups. The Public Library Online allows library members to read Restless and other books simultaneously, either in the library or remotely through the website providing a useful resource for shared reading experiences such as reading groups.

12.2 Parkwood Hall Shakespeare Festival

On 15 October 22 students from **Parkwood Hall School** performed their version of Romeo and Juliet at the Catford Broadway Theatre. This was part of the national Shakespeare Schools' Festival which involved some 600 schools performing in 80 theatres throughout the country. Parkwood Hall's performance incorporated a Tudor dance and featured one student singing solo to start and conclude the performance. The local MP attended and spoke at the end of the performance. Parkwood Hall's students were complimented on their moving interpretation of the play and on the excellent teamwork which was evident through their performance. The Festival organisers were so impressed with the performance that they specially asked to visit the school and see another performance of the play.

12.3 National conference for RE

The national conference for teachers and advisers of RE took place on 16 and 17 October. It was held near Reading and attended by over 200 delegates from primary, secondary and special schools. There were also local authority school improvement advisers, Ofsted inspectors and representatives from the Department for Education and Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QDCA) present. The opening session on Saturday morning involved students from Holland Park School. The students spoke powerfully about the enjoyment and impact their study of RE had brought them. Between the six students the diversity of the school

was well represented and they acted as excellent ambassadors for the school and the Royal Borough.

10.4 Welcome reception

On Wednesday 22 September the Schools Directorate hosted a Welcome Reception for colleagues new to the borough's schools. Over 70 guests joined members of the directorate to learn more about the local authority and its schools.

10.5 Annual residential conference for Deputy and Assistant Headteachers

The annual residential conference for Deputy and Assistant Headteachers took place in Brighton from 16 -17 October. Teachers from both the primary and secondary phase took part and over half of the borough's schools were represented at the conference. The theme for the conference was 'And the main thing is learning' and it included three presentations by existing headteachers from within the borough.

11. CHELSEA ACADEMY UPDATE

11.1 Chelsea Academy is now occupying the new building at Lots Road. The design and quality have been commended by all who have visited it. The official opening will take place on 22 November. The guest of honour is the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, Secretary of State for Education. Other VIP guests include the Bishop of London and Lord Winston, who will address the guests and a school assembly to take place on the same day. All members of the Council have been invited.

12. HOLLAND PARK UPDATE

12.1 The school is currently occupying the temporary accommodation which was handed over by Shepherd Construction at the beginning of September, as well as part of the old school. The remainder of the school has been demolished. Piling and construction of the new school are due to start shortly.

13. KENSINGTON ACADEMY UPDATE

13.1 Following meeting between the academies minister, Lord Hill, the Lead sponsor Rod Aldridge (of the Aldridge Foundation) and the Leader of the Council the funding decisions for the academy are now due to be announced by the minister at the end of the calendar year.

13.2 The Expression of Interest (EoI) which has been drawn up by the Lead sponsor with Family and Children's Services and the Department for Education (DfE) consultants will be presented to the DfE Operations Board for scrutiny and comment on 16th November. After their comments and

any amendments required it will follow the DfE EoI sign-off procedure with ministerial sign-off anticipated during January 2011. This will enable the feasibility phase to commence. The project management and procurement routes have yet to be decided with the latter awaiting the James report to the DfE.

- 13.3 The Expression of Interest will be submitted for sign off by the RBKC cabinet in on 6th January.
- 13.4 With the delay in the funding announcements, and the change in the BSF programme, the project programme has become increasingly tight to enable the opening of the academy in September 2014. Any further delay in decisions beyond the start of the New Year will put the opening of the academy in September 2014 at risk.

14. NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

14.1 A new approach for Children's Trust Boards and Children and Young People's Plans.

The government has announced a new approach for Children's Trusts by reducing the level of prescription over local partnership arrangements. From 31 October: statutory children's trust guidance is withdrawn and children and young people's plan regulations are revoked. This means Children's Trust Boards will not be required to produce a children and young people's plan.

The forthcoming Education Bill (subject to parliamentary approval) will remove the duty on schools, non-maintained special schools, academies and FE colleges to cooperate through children's trusts.

In the next parliamentary session the Coalition Government intends (subject to parliamentary approval) to remove the requirement for local areas to have a Children's Trust Board and for Job Centre Plus to be a 'relevant partner' under a formal 'duty to cooperate'.

14.2 First report from the Munro Review of Child Protection

Professor Munro published the first report from the review of child protection system in England on 1 October 2010. The report highlights that processes and procedures, and the unintentional consequences of previous reforms, are getting in the way of social workers spending time with vulnerable children and families. The problems identified by Professor Munro in the report include

- professionals too focused on complying with rules and regulations and so spending less time assessing children's needs
- a target-driven culture meaning social workers are unable to exercise their professional judgement
- too much emphasis on identifying families and not enough attention to putting children's needs first

- serious case reviews concentrating only on errors when things have gone wrong, rather than looking at good practice and continually reflecting on what could be done better
- concerns about the impact of delays in the family courts on the welfare of children.
- professionals becoming demoralised over time as organisations fail to recognise the emotional impact of the work they do and the support they need.

The final report will be published in April 2011.

13. KEY DECISIONS

13.1 Transfer of responsibilities from the Catholic Children's Society Adoption Agency (03368/10/S/A)

The Council will acquire a responsibility for approximately 6,000 adoption case files of the society and the duties that flow from holding those files due to the planned closure of the Adoption Agency in the next financial year. Responsibility for transfer in such cases is set out in The Adoption Agency Regulations 2005 Section 43 (2)

13.2 Award of Supporting People 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.

13.3 Appointment of a Communications Agency with regard to the proposed new Academy and Leisure Centre (03444/10/E/A)

This key decision seeks approval to appoint a specialist agency to help meet the communications challenges created by the Council's ambitions for a new academy and leisure centre in North Kensington This will be a joint decision with Councillor Paget-Brown There will be a Part B appendix.

13.4 PVI workforce development programme 2010/11 (03438/10/S/A)

To contract with the Kensington and Chelsea Social Council to deliver a programme of work funded by the £20,000 grant provided by the Children's Workforce Development Council to support workforce development in the PVI sector.

14. CHILDREN WITHOUT A SCHOOL PLACE

- 14.1 At the last meeting of the FCS Scrutiny Committee members asked to be advised of the number of children who had been offered a school place and had not accepted it, and were therefore without a school place despite the best efforts of the Council. It was recognised that this figure changes on a regular basis and therefore current figures will be presented at the 22 November meeting.

FOR INFORMATION

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Appendix A

ROYAL BOROUGH OF KENSINGTON AND CHELSEA SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ON FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES

22 NOVEMBER 2010

MID YEAR REPORT ON ADOPTION AND PERMANENCE SERVICES

The purpose of this report is to inform Members about the work of the Adoption and Permanence Team between 1 April and 30 September 2010 as required by the regulations for the Adoption and Children Act 2002.

FOR INFORMATION

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This short, midway report is provided to Members to fulfil the requirement to report to the Executive on the work of the adoption service twice a year. In addition there are half yearly reports to the lead member for Children and Families on the numbers of children waiting for an adoptive home and the approved adopters waiting for families.
- 1.2 Members will receive the full annual report for 2010-2011 in June 2011.

2. FAMILY FINDING, MATCHING and PERFORMANCE

- 2.1 Since April 2010 five children have been adopted and a further two made subjects of special guardianship orders with friends and family members. Four of the adopted children were adopted by RBKC approved adopters thus saving interagency fees for the local authority.
- 2.2 Tragically, one of the adopted children, who had profound disabilities due to prematurity, died shortly after her adoption as a result of an undiagnosed bowel condition. She had been living with her adoptive parents, who were her former foster carers, for fifteen months before her death. She had enjoyed an exceptional quality of life during her time with them.
- 2.2 A further three children have been linked with adoptive families. Two of them are already in placement; their foster carers wish to adopt them and are being assessed to adopt.

- 2.3 Four more children are soon to be matched with prospective permanent families – three of whom are friends and family members. There are currently five children with permanence decisions for adoption awaiting placement. However progress for four of them is delayed as court proceedings have yet to conclude.
- 2.4 A further four RBKC approved adoptive families have adopted or been matched with children from other local authorities between April 1 and September 30.

3. ADOPTER RECRUITMENT

- 3.1 It has been a successful year so far for adopter recruitment with two preparation groups being held for the first time in five years. The Adoption Team attended community events during the summer months in order to raise the profile of the Royal Borough's adoption service and held information meetings at the London Lighthouse in April, May and July and September.
- 3.2 The service continued the advertising campaign to attract adopters for the Borough's black, Asian and mixed heritage children with an information meeting in the Town hall in June.
- 3.3 Eight prospective adoptive families have been approved by the agency between 1 April and 30 September.

4. INTERCOUNTRY ADOPTION

- 4.1 The past six months have been happy ones for inter-country adopters. The Royal Borough has welcomed five children from Russia, Ghana and India into their adoptive families since 1 April 2010. A further two families have been matched with children from overseas.
- 4.2 Eight families have been approved to adopt from overseas since April 1, including: five families for Russia, one for China and two families to adopt relatives from The Philippines and Morocco.

5. FRIENDS AND FAMILY PLACEMENTS

- 5.1 This area of work continues to grow. The service has concluded fourteen friends and family assessments since April 1 with a further four families currently in assessment to be permanent carers for the Borough's looked after children. Five of the assessments have concluded positively with family members being recommended as special guardians or foster carers for eight looked after children. A further five families await decisions from the Family Courts. Four assessments did not recommend placement.

6. ADOPTION SUPPORT

- 6.1 The adoption support service has provided support to 119 adoptive families, adopted adults and adopted people. The service received thirty-

seven enquiries for adoption support between 1 April and 30 September 2010.

- 6.2 The adoption support service is preparing to absorb adoption support enquiries for the Catholic Children's society which is to cease trading as an adoption agency in 2011 and whose head office lies within The Royal Borough.

7. RESOURCES

- 7.1 The Family Placement Unit database has been expanded to include a module on payments to carers. This significant development was commissioned in house in 2009 to simplify payments, save administrative time and minimise errors. A successful pilot has just been concluded. FPU payments will replace the Trojan finance system by the end of October 2010.
- 7.2 One half time social work post has been held vacant during the year. One part time social worker returned from adoption leave in September 2010. One SW and one business support team member are currently on maternity leave. A further two social workers will commence maternity leave in January 2011.
- 7.3 Fifteen inter-country and friends and family assessments have been completed by sessional social workers during the last six months in order to absorb the shortfall in staff hours.

8. SAFEGUARDING

- 8.1 All sessional workers, members of the adoption and permanence team and adoption panel members have enhanced CRB checks.
- 8.2 The service continues to supervise and make arrangements for supervision of direct contact between some children placed with friends and family carers and their birth parents. The Senior Social Worker for Friends and Family ensures these contacts are safe by speaking to other professionals in the parents' network before the contact goes ahead.

FOR INFORMATION

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