

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION SCRUTINY PANEL HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 29TH JUNE, 2022

MEMBERS: Councillors Elif Erbil, Andrew Thorp, Adrian Grumi, Ruby Sampson and Mohammad Islam, Ruby Sampson and Andrew Thorp

Officers: Tony Theodoulou (Executive Director People), Suzanne Connolly (Governance Officer)

Also Attending: Cllr Abdul Abdullahi (Cabinet Member Children's Services)

1. WELCOME & APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Apologies were received from the following:

Cllr Gunes Akbulut, substituted by Cllr Mohammad Islam
Cllr Nelly Gyosheva
Cllr Suna Hurman
Cllr Ahmet Oykenner

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest registered in respect of any items on the agenda.

3. INTRODUCTION - PURPOSE OF MEETING

The Chair explained that the purpose of this meeting was to receive details of priorities for the coming municipal year, including key issues, and then for the members to prioritise items for the work programme.

4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

AGREED the minutes of the meeting held on 8 March 2022.

5. TERMS OF REFERENCE

The terms of reference were received and noted.

6. LOCAL PRIORITIES FOR 2022/23

The Cabinet Member for Children's Services, Cllr Abdul Abdullahi, and the Executive Director People, Tony Theodoulou, were in attendance to outline the priorities and areas of challenge for the coming year.

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION SCRUTINY PANEL - 29.6.2022

1. There were two overall areas of priority; Education Services and Children and Family Services.

Education Services:

- School Attendance – the Government were planning changes around this
- Education White Paper and SEND Green paper – information update
- School Places – falling rolls, funding, particularly in Primary
- Education Psychology – service review
- Early Years – service review
- School Governors – service review

Children and Family Services:

- Recruitment and retention of social workers – there was a national shortage of social workers
- Early Help – Family Hub development
- Service user participation – feedback from children and carers
- Recruitment and retention of foster carers – there was a national shortage of foster carers
- Children’s Home development – facilities for those with disabilities or social behaviour issues
- Education outside of the borough (SEND) – very expensive. A new SEND school, Salmon’s Brook, was planned to open in September in the East of the borough
- Services to young people involved in the criminal justice system – the number of young offenders involved for the first time, and the number re-offending
- Annual Safeguarding report (October)
- Ofsted Inspection – this was taking place next week looking at Care Leavers

2. It was highlighted that almost all services in these areas were demand-led so difficult to control.
3. Cllr Islam asked about the services available to help prevent young offenders offending again. Tony Theodoulou, Executive Director People, advised that there were a range of services available including youth services such as Nexus, therapies, and individual support for example family/friends.

The Cabinet Member and Executive Director left the meeting at this point.

7. PLANNING THE WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2022/23

1. The Chair, Cllr Erbil, recommended the following items to be included in this year’s work programme:
 - SEND places

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & EDUCATION SCRUTINY PANEL - 29.6.2022

- Borough care places
 - Recruitment & retention of social workers
 - Recruitment & retention of foster carers
 - Development of family hubs.
2. Cllr Thorp responded on behalf of the Conservative members present, stating that they would also like the following items to be considered:
- Monitoring the quality and inconsistency of school meals
 - Attendance – focus on patterns (White Paper), students returning to home countries post Covid
 - Violence towards teachers – data, patterns, safeguarding for staff, intervention.
3. Cllr Islam would like to look at youth offenders, particularly around the activities available to help them and the under-used services such as youth centres and cadets.
4. It was noted that the Annual Safeguarding Report would be included in the November meeting.
5. Members of the panel agreed that they would like an additional meeting.
ACTION: Cllr Erbil to request this from the Monitoring Officer.

8. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS

The dates of future meetings were noted.

The meeting ended at 8.00 pm.