

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE O&S PANEL

18 APRIL 2012

7.15 – 9:25pm

PRESENT: Councillor Jeff Hanna (in the chair), Councillors Agatha Akyigyina, Laxmi Attawar, Iain Dysart, Karin Forbes, James Holmes, Dennis Pearce, Linda Scott, Simon Withey
Andrew Boxall, Amanda Stuart Fisher, Anna Juster

ALSO PRESENT: Councillor Peter Walker
Yvette Stanley, Director - Children Schools and Families, Paul Ballatt, Head of Commissioning, Strategy and Performance, Michael Sutherland, Service Manager, Policy, Planning and Performance, Julia Groom, Joint Consultant in Public Health, Rebecca Redman, Scrutiny Officer.

1 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Andrew Boxall declared a personal interest as a Governor of Bishopsford School.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from: Alison Jerrard (Secondary Head teacher Representative), Councillor Richard Hilton and Councillor Maxi Martin.

3 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 22nd February 2012

RESOLVED: That the minutes are agreed as an accurate record of the meeting subject to the addition of Mrs Anna Juster to the attendees listed.

4 MATTERS ARISING

Paul Ballatt made copies of the Parenting handbook available to the Panel and offered to make further copies available as requested.

5 UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING THE CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

Paul Ballatt introduced the report and updated the Panel on the outcomes of the recent OFSTED inspection. The OFSTED inspection report had not been available at the time of the last Panel meeting. The Panel were informed that the Council had been judged as 'good' against all 22 judgement areas. Members heard that Merton Council were in the top 40% of authorities rated 'good' or 'outstanding' in London and that the inspection made positive comments about accountability and the role Members play in holding the department to account.

Paul Ballatt also informed Members that there had been some further promising Ofsted inspection results in the primary sector with 80% of primary schools now rated as good or better.

Yvette Stanley updated the Panel on the Council's position on Bishopsford School. As a result of the school's very disappointing Ofsted inspection, the Secretary of State has been asked to consider making an academy order in respect of the school.

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The council is also seeking consent to establish an Interim Executive Board for the school to oversee the smooth transition to academy status..

Paul Ballatt updated Members on the Troubled Families Initiative. The department is currently seeking to engage partner organisations in this initiative designed to work with c370 families in Merton which have the most complex/multiple problems during a 3-year programme.

Members were informed that the department are looking at opportunities to encourage better data and information sharing with other key agencies through the establishment of a Multi Agency Safeguarding (or screening) Hub (known as MASH). Paul Ballatt outlined the current position on school admissions. The department had received 2629 applications on time this year with 66% of applications made online (compared with 50% last year).

Members noted that 2118 parents will get their first choice school place, 97.6% of applicants will receive their second place preference and 93% will receive a listed preference. 22 applications have been made which have resulted in parents not accepting the place offered. 50 late applications have yet to receive offers. A second round of offers will be made with a view to providing the best fit solution for parents.

Councillor Jeff Hanna placed on record thanks and congratulations to the department for the outcomes of the OFSTED inspection.

Councillor Peter Walker commented on the good results in primary schools and the work that had been undertaken to ensure every child has a school place due to the imaginative expansion of schools.

In response to a question raised by Amanda Stuart Fisher regarding concerns raised by governors on the availability of school expansions, Paul Ballatt outlined that a strategy to ensure sufficient school places by 2015 was in place. In the region of 28 additional forms of entry are being planned and current 'good' and 'outstanding' schools, as well as more popular schools, will be expanded.

In response to a question raised by Councillor James Holmes regarding the report being presented to the Panel as an information item and the lack of recommendations on items/issues needing to be scrutinised in the report, Paul Ballatt confirmed that the report is an information item and that the Panel requested this update report. It was felt that the report is a useful way of the Panel selecting items of interest or concern that they may wish to scrutinise as part of their 2012/13 work programme. Paul Ballatt acknowledged that Members of the Panel wish to scrutinise key issues and that the Panel could choose not to receive the report. Cllr Hanna confirmed Paul Ballatt's understanding of the purpose of the item, introduced at the beginning of the council year, with no intention that a level of detail would be provided that would enable full scrutiny of the issues, but that the Panel might chose to request a more detailed report on any matter for fuller scrutiny at a future meeting.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Agatha Akiyigyina regarding parental choice, vacant school places and encouraging take up, Paul Ballatt confirmed that the department would seek to offer vacancies to a child that lives near to that

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particular school. The School Admissions Team are looking to make the best offer they can but it is ultimately the parent's decision where they chose to send their child to school.

Yvette Stanley added comments on the status of Bishopsford School and planned next steps in relation to the Interim Executive Board.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Karin Forbes about how the Interim Executive Board for Bishopsford School would be set up, Yvette Stanley confirmed that representatives with the relevant professional expertise would be selected. Discussions are currently underway with the Secretary of State to discuss suitable candidates.

In response to comments by Andrew Boxall about how the Council is supporting schools going through an OFSTED inspection under the new OFSTED framework, Yvette Stanley confirmed that 4 schools had been inspected under the new framework since January 2012. 81% of schools had been inspected to date at different times and therefore not all schools have been inspected under the new framework.

Councillor Iain Dysart agreed with Councillor James Holmes that it is important for the Scrutiny Panel to receive reports they are able to scrutinise, not just note. Councillor Iain Dysart also asked about funding from DCLG in relation to troubled families and intervention. Yvette Stanley confirmed that information on funding for the 3 year programme had yet to be released by central government. The department are currently costing their work with troubled families to provide a baseline to central government.

Yvette Stanley welcomed the Panel scrutinising the department's work with troubled families once the programme was further advanced but also noted that the Council are working to prescriptive timelines and requirements guidelines from central government.

Report received.

6 MERTON'S CHILDRENS TRUST

Paul Ballatt outlined the content of the report stating the departments continued commitment to partnership working as a key tool to improve outcomes for children. The report provided feedback on OFSTED judgements on current partnership practices and arrangements. Yvette Stanley confirmed that there were no priority areas for action as part of the OFSTED inspection for the Council but some less significant actions for the council and its LSCB/Children's trust partners. These improvements would be negotiated through the relevant partnership boards. Yvette Stanley offered the action plan for the Panels information at a future meeting when it has been fully developed should the Panel be interested in seeing this.

Councillor Linda Scott requested clarification on S47. Paul Ballatt confirmed that S47 arises from the 1989 Children's Act and requires Local Authorities, with concerns about potential significant harm to a child, to investigation of risk/need for protection in a timely fashion. Social Workers in Access and Assessment undertake this role

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and the OFSTED inspection highlighted areas for further work and good working practices. The areas for development concern management oversight of S47 interventions, outcomes and progress. S47 processes will be audited and best practice will be shared to ensure continued professional development. Yvette Stanley reassured the Panel that OFSTED did not have any concerns regarding our S47 identification or responses and that intervention and assessment was undertaken in a timely fashion. The issues raised were linked to how outcomes are reviewed and monitored post assessment. Councillor Linda Scott raised a question regarding timescales for a S47 intervention. Yvette Stanley confirmed that depending on the level of risk the child is at then an investigation can take anything from 24hours for the immediate response and up to 10 days for an assessment to be undertaken. Turnaround has to be quick when urgent cases are identified and the team respond accordingly.

In response to a question from Andrew Boxall, Paul Ballatt explained that the department had paused various initiatives whilst the Troubled Families Strategy is being developed and appropriate action to be taken will be incorporated into the Action Plan accompanying the Strategy.

Report received.

7 PUBLIC HEALTH TRANSITION AND PERFORMANCE IN MERTON

The Panel welcomed Julia Groom, Joint Consultant in Public Health. Julia Groom briefed the Panel on the planned transition of public health functions from the NHS to the Local Authority in 2013; and updated the Panel on public health performance in Merton, in particular in relation to childhood immunisation, childhood obesity and dental registrations.

Julia Groom outlined the range of commissioning responsibilities and services that will be transferred to the Local Authority, many of which have an impact on children and young people and will be determined locally (the detail of which was included in the appended Transition Plan). The Panel were informed that over the coming months and years, the Local Authority would have an opportunity to review or assess those services transferred. Some services will transfer to the Public Health NHS Commissioning Board until 2015 and will then transfer to the Local Authority, such as Health Visiting.

The Panel heard that a ring fenced grant would be provided to the Council and would be finalised in December 2012. The amount of funding that has been estimated by the Department of Health was based on historical spend by the NHS. The estimate for Merton is £7.5 m and this equates to £34 per head of population, compared with £40 per head of population as the England average spend. Julia Groom stated the case for seeking an increased allocation of funding for the borough.

Members heard that a Transition Board had been set up and that Yvette Stanley sat on this board. This Board meets monthly to manage the delivery of the Transition Plan. The Board also reports to the Shadow Health and Wellbeing Board.

The performance information presented to the Panel set out performance against a

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range of public health indicators for the borough. Members noted that in some areas performance was better than the national average. Performance data, Members were told, was held jointly with Sutton and the team were in the process of disaggregating this information to ensure performance information could be provided specifically for each borough, and where possible in relation to specific wards.

The Panel were informed that performance against the National Childhood Immunisation Programme had been routinely monitored and that a local programme had been put together to tackle the issues encountered.

Members heard that for childhood obesity statistics, there were clear differences between the East and West of the borough, from reception class up to Year 6.

Information presented on teenage pregnancy highlighted a reduction in the under 18 conception rate.

Councillor Peter Walker stated his thanks for highlighting the issue of childhood obesity in this report. Councillor Peter Walker felt that there was more that could be done regarding advertising, the availability of fast food and in relation to access to a healthy diet and lifestyle for those living in poverty.

In response to a question from Councillor Dennis Pearce, Julia Groom confirmed that work had been undertaken to review the performance of GP Practices in encouraging immunisation. Yvette Stanley contributed to the discussion by adding that there are also issues with the take up of immunisations as parents have fears regarding autism etc.

Councillor Agatha Akiygyina commented on the importance of challenging the amount of ring fenced funding the Authority would receive to ensure spend per head of population is on par with the England average spend. In addition, Councillor Agatha Akiygyina asked why incentives were being offered to GP's to increase the uptake of immunisations. Julia Groom informed the Panel that an additional level of resource was being offered to Doctors to incentivise improved performance against immunisation targets.

Councillor Iain Dysart questioned the perception of GP's not seeking to encourage immunisation and how necessary a vaccination and incentive scheme actually is. Yvette Stanley confirmed that this is a commissioning issue and an incentive scheme was put in place to increase take up of vaccinations. As public health responsibilities transfer to the Council, the Authority will have a role to look at how the immunisation targets are met.

In response to a question raised by Andrew Boxall, Yvette Stanley noted that dentists do not currently visit primary schools but that there is provision within Children's Centres to educate parents and children on good oral health. Health promotion is also undertaken in schools, with every primary school in the borough holding healthy schools status; and PSE classes delivered in secondary schools at KS3 which highlight the importance of a healthy diet and lifestyle.

In response to Cllr Jeff Hanna's question, Julia Groom confirmed that performance data was only captured in Reception and Year 6 for childhood obesity. However,

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maintaining a healthy weight is encouraged across all schools and colleges. The National Child Measurement Scheme does not continue post secondary level.

Julia Groom also responded to the comments raised by Councillor Peter Walker and Councillor Jeff Hanna by confirming that the NHS and Local Authority are seeking to get local businesses to sign pledges to act more responsibly in advocating a healthy lifestyle and in relation to other public health issues. There is also a local public health responsibility initiative being discussed, working with the Merton Chamber of Commerce and the Environment and Regeneration Department.

RESOLVED : The Panel received the report and formally expressed its concern at the unequal funding allocation described above, asked that this be conveyed to the relevant bodies as representations were made, and asked that the Panel be kept informed.

8 PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Michael Sutherland introduced this report and explained the commentary to panel.

Councillor Jeff Hanna referred to the indicators reflecting timeliness of Child Protection assessments, which were again red. He noted previous explanation that it was the *quality of the assessments* and the timeliness of the *intervention*, which officers had advised were more relevant, and noted also previous advice that the government is planning on introducing alternative performance indicators. He suggested that Panel receive a report at the July meeting addressing these issues, which might suggest the need for improvement, or might be reassuring.

In response, Paul Ballatt confirmed to Members that he had suggested a report from the department on what auditing of assessments is showing. Councillor Jeff Hanna confirmed his view that a report from officers on how the Council is ensuring both quality of assessment through auditing, and also timeliness of intervention. Councillor Iain Dysart also requested that reference be made in the update to how the ambitious forward targets would be achieved. This was agreed.

Councillor James Holmes questioned why the Panel were receiving information against indicators listed as 'green' and commented that the Panel should only receive information on underperformance to enable scrutiny of problem areas or issues.

Councillor Dennis Pearce commented that the Panel should receive actual figures against some indicators and not just percentages as this can be misleading.

In response to a request from Andrew Boxall, Michael Sutherland confirmed that a breakdown of SEN statements approved in primary and secondary schools was possible.

Councillor Jeff Hanna informed the Panel that he had received an indication from Paul Ballatt and Yvette Stanley that the data set the Panel receives can be changed in the new municipal year further to the topic selection workshops, if Members would like this to happen. In addition Councillor Jeff Hanna added that a performance monitoring lead would need to be identified at the Panel meeting in July 2012.

Paul Ballatt confirmed that the Munro Review data set would be available to share

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with Members at the Panel at their July meeting (subject to DfE issuing a final data set).

RESOLVED:

- 1) The Panel noted the performance information presented and requested a report to the July 2012 Panel meeting on Lines 2, 3, 5 and 14.**
- 2) That the Panel receive the data set in draft form resulting from the Munro Review at their meeting in July 2012.**

9 PLANNING THE PANELS 2012/13 WORK PROGRAMME

Councillor Jeff Hanna introduced the report and sought topic suggestions from the Panel, along with potential items for the agenda for the Panels first meeting of the 2012/13 municipal year.

The Panel confirmed that they would wait for the topic suggestion workshops in May 2012 to share topic suggestions. The Panel also requested that the first meeting of the new municipal year be used to receive the Update Report on developments within CSF, agree the Panels 2012/13 work programme and to receive further information on Key Performance Indicators highlighted in the discussion of Item 8 (as above).

RESOLVED: The Panel noted the report and agreed to raise suggestions for the 2012/13 work programme at the Topic Selection Workshops in May 2012.