

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: February 27th 2013

Agenda item: 7

Wards:

Subject: **Update on Developments Affecting Children, Schools and Families**

Department

Lead officer: Yvette Stanley

Lead member: Cllr Maxi Martin, Cllr Martin Whelton

Forward Plan reference number: N/A

Contact officer: Paul Ballatt

Recommendations:

A. Members of the panel note the contents of the report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1. The report provides members of the public with information on key developments affecting Children, Schools and Families Department since the panel's last update report in January 2013.

2 DETAILS

2.1 Ofsted's inspection of Merton's adoption services took place at the end of January 2013. This was a scheduled inspection with inspectors examining documentation and data; interviewing staff, independent members of the authority's statutory adoption and fostering permanence panel and adoptive parents. Inspectors provided positive feedback to managers at the end of the inspection and although not yet published the report is expected to confirm that the rating for the service has improved from the 'satisfactory' judgement made at the last inspection in 2009.

2.2 As part of its national 'Ending Gang and Youth Violence' programme, supported by the Local Government Association, the Home Office recently announced that a peer review of Merton's approach is to be undertaken in March 2013. Officers in Children Schools and Families Department are working with colleagues in Safer Merton, the Police and Probation services to prepare for the review. The aims of the review are to assist local areas ensure that their partnerships have effective structures and responses in place to contribute to ending gang and youth violence. A local position statement is being prepared for the reviewers along with data and a range of strategic and operational documentation. The review will examine strategic leadership; how accurately areas have 'mapped' the extent of gang activity and serious youth crime and how effectively partnerships are responding. Following a week's fieldwork, the Home Office team will produce a report with recommendations, expected to be delivered in April

2013. It is understood that this report will be private to the partners engaged in the review although key findings will be made available to elected members in Merton.
- 2.3 Three further Ofsted school inspections using the new more taxing inspection framework introduced in September 2012 have reported since the last update to panel members in January 2013. Merton Abbey primary school has improved its rating to 'good'. Liberty primary school, rated satisfactory at its last inspection, received a similar judgement although Ofsted now defines this rating as 'requiring improvement' – inspectors noted in their report, however, that significant improvement had already been made since the previous inspection. Hollymount primary school was also rated as 'requiring improvement'. Detailed improvement plans have already been put in place by both these schools supported by the local authority's school improvement services.
- 2.4 Following consultation with the respective governing body and management committee, officers are currently consulting more broadly on a proposal to establish a formal partnership between Melrose school and the SMART Centre. The aim of the proposal is to improve and extend provision for pupils with challenging behaviour to enable greater educational success, equality of opportunity and routes for progression. A single Headteacher will be appointed with greater alignment between the current Melrose school governing body and SMART Centre's management committee, sharing of staff expertise and resources. The proposal also includes the appointment of a dedicated commissioner for alternative education provision. The local authority considers that the increased integration outlined in the proposal will provide better value for money, will support the further leadership capacity of staff at both sites, and will lead to improved outcomes for pupils. Subject to consultation feedback, it is intended that the new arrangements will begin in September 2013.
- 2.5 Panel members have previously been informed of the establishment of a local Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, departmental re-organisation of children's social care and youth inclusion services and the development of new 'enhanced' level in house and commissioned preventive services. As part of a broader programme of information giving about these 'whole system' changes and multi-agency training in new referral pathways and assessment processes, a series of partner events are in progress. Over 250 staff and managers across Merton's Children's Trust partnership are expected to attend one of these events which will be followed by ongoing induction for new staff joining children's services in Merton and specialist multi-agency training.
- 2.6 A number of appointments to the new Social Care and Youth Inclusion Division have been made. Paul Angeli has accepted the post of permanent Assistant Director for the Division, replacing Theresa Leavy at the end of her interim term. Mawuli Beckley Kartey, currently Team Manager of the advice and assessment team, has been appointed Service Manager for MASH and Child Protection. Marcia Whitehall Smith, currently Service Manager for Family Support, has been appointed Service manager for Social Work Intervention Services. Lee Hopkins retains his role of Service Manager for Safeguards Standards and Training. Curtis Ashton will join

- Merton as Service Manager for Family and Adolescent Services. Sarah Daley joins the department as Service Manager for Permanency and Looked After Children.
- 2.7 Senior staff in the CSF department are currently undertaking a 'back to the door' exercise involving attendance at key social care processes inc CP conferences and observation of practice eg in our frontline 'duty' service. This initiative is designed to help inform senior managers of issues faced by staff and service users on a daily basis and is part of the department's commitment to embedding a comprehensive quality assurance framework applied to all departmental services.
- 2.8 Merton's Multi Systemic Therapy service, delivered through a partnership with South West London and St George's Mental Health NHS Trust and LBs Kingston and Sutton won the 2012 Health Service Journal's award for partnership.
- 3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**
- 3.1. None for the purposes of this report.
- 4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**
- 4.1. None for the purposes of this report.
- 5 TIMETABLE**
- 5.1. N/A
- 6 FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**
- 6.1. No specific implications.
- 7 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**
- 7.1. No specific implications.
- 8 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**
- 8.1. No specific implications.
- 9 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**
- 9.1. No specific implications.
- 10 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**
- 10.1. No specific implications.
- 11 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**
- N/A
- 12 BACKGROUND PAPERS**
- 12.1. None