

Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Date: 13th March 2019

Wards: All wards

Subject: Departmental Update Report March 2019

Lead officer: Rachael Wardell, Director of Children Schools and Families

Lead members: Cllr Kelly Braund, Cabinet Member for Children Services

Cllr Caroline Cooper-Marbiah, Cabinet Member for Education

Contact officer: Sharon Buckby, Interim Head of Service for Policy, Planning and Performance

Recommendations:

A. Members of the panel to discuss and comment on the contents of the report.

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report provides members of the panel with information on key developments not covered elsewhere on the agenda and affecting the Children, Schools and Families Department since the panel's last meeting in February 2018. It focusses on those aspects of particular relevance to the department and those where the Panel expressed an interest in receiving regular updates.

2 DETAILS

- 2.1. **Primary School Places:** With regard to primary school places, the council experienced an exceptional increase in demand for places, which required a substantial increase in reception year (first year of primary school) places from 2008 to 2015. In 2017/18 there were more pupils in Merton primary schools for more than a generation – a rise of 4,367 pupils on roll (34%) compared to 11 years previously.
- 2.2. However, in 2016/17 there started to be a drop in demand for reception year places that has continued to 2018/19. The GLA forecast is for the reception year roll to now be relatively stable for the forthcoming years (and September 2019 admissions preference data confirms this), but as the lower numbers flow through all year groups there is forecast to be some 1,300 fewer pupils in primary school than the peak, though still 3,000 more than in 2006/07. Uncertainty over migration patterns and future live births will also impact on demand.
- 2.3. **Secondary school places:** September 2018 saw the largest single year increase in demand for year 7 places in over a generation with the year 7 roll being 217 more than the previous year.

- 2.4. Although the resident population for 2019 is stable compared to 2018, Admissions offer day (1 March) showed a strong increase in preference for Merton Schools, which is a testament to the increase in standards over a number of years. Admissions offer day information indicates that there will be a 6% increase in Merton residents attending Merton schools. This is a testament to the increase in standards over a number of years. Officers are currently in discussion with secondary headteachers regarding some extra places being provided for September to meet demand.
- 2.5. Along with its neighbouring schools, the new Harris Academy Wimbledon school is fully subscribed. For its permanent site the ESFA's contractor has commenced demolition works, and with Elim agreeing a temporary move there is a fully clear site to enable the contractor's programme to complete the permanent school for September 2020.
- 2.6. **Special Education Provision** Works to expand Cricket Green are progressing well. Outline proposals for the creation of additional places for children with special educational needs have been included in the capital programme for coming years, including a secondary school autism unit, primary SEMH provision, a primary ASD base, a secondary SEMH / medical PRU and new ASD provision. One of the proposals is to provide a 24 place ASD base at Stanford Primary School through adaptation of their surplus accommodation and the school has recently undertaken the consultation as required for Academy schools.
- 2.7. **Youth Crime Prevention Executive Board** held a visioning event on 25th February 2019. Executive Board members were able to discuss key issues arising from data analysis. Of particular note were:
- The prevalence of 14-16 year olds coming to notice and in particular link to exclusions in year 9.
 - The disproportionality in the sentencing of black young people for the same arrests
 - The prevalence of family stress, debt and housing instability for working and non- working families for young people who offend
 - The prevalence of family and network connections to offending behaviour
 - The link between early trauma and offending
 - The small number (30) young people who are engaged in serious organised crime including county lines and knife crime.
- 2.8. The Board along with the multiagency youth justice team explored the reasons for these factors and the preventative steps that could be taken to pre-empt these issues or to work with families to address these issues. Five priority areas were identified supported by a multiagency dataset that provides greater understanding of the prevalence and underlying factors of offending behaviour in the borough (Public Health model for youth justice).

- 2.9. The new Youth Crime Prevention Plan will be launched in the next financial year.
- 2.10. **The MSCB** has made good progress in making the transition from a Local Safeguarding Children Board under to the Children Act 2004 to becoming a Local Safeguarding Children Partnership in accordance with the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The new Partnership consists of the three statutory safeguarding partners (the Local Authority, Merton CCG and the Merton Police Basic Command Unit); Relevant Agencies including schools, colleges and other education providers, housing, probation etc., and co-opted members. Subject to the formal agreement of the three statutory partners, the new Merton Safeguarding Children Partnership will begin on 1st April 2019 as planned.
- 2.11. The MSCB has also made significant progress in improving its performance and quality assurance framework. The proposed MSCP Multi-agency performance framework looks to understand the quality and impact of partner engagement in the safeguarding system. It is organised around the journey of the child, and the evaluation criteria of the Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework, evaluation criteria of the Joint Targeted Inspection (JTAI) framework, Working Together 2018 and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2018.
- 2.12. The combined framework should provide Partners with assurance that
- The Partnership is meeting its statutory duties
 - The Partnership is achieving its priorities
 - The Partnership is ensuring quality across the safeguarding system
 - The Partnership sets the right priorities to meet these needs
 - The Partnership is holding partners and board members to account for providing effective safeguarding services to children and families in Merton
- 2.13. Reporting via an outcomes based accountability framework we will be able to evidence:
- How *much* did we do (quantity)?
 - How *well did* we do it (quality)?
 - Is *anyone better* off as a result (impact)?
 - What are we going to do to continue improve (action planning and prioritisation)?
- 2.14. **Youth Service and support for young people who are NEET.** Targeted NEET support workers supported young people over the half term in a number of youth organised events to support young people post 16 who are NEET. Many of these young people suffer from anxiety that affects their ability to access education or work. The youth service have continued to be financially supported by MOAT housing (£50K) in Pollards Hill and we would

like to thank the housing association for their continued support to the youth centre via the PHCC funding. Employability is a route out of being NEET. We have continued to work with local employers such as IDVERDE to support hard to reach young people into work.

- 2.15. **AD Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion.** An interim AD, Allison Parkinson, has joined Children, Schools and Families for a handover period with current AD Paul Angeli, who leaves Merton on 20 March 2019. We extend our thanks to Paul for his hard work for Merton over the years, and welcome Allison to the directorate. Recruitment for a substantive replacement is under way with interviews scheduled for end March 2019.
- 2.16. **Ofsted.** The Ofsted Annual Conversation for Children's Social Care took place on Monday 4 March, and incorporated a discussion of our progress on implementing the SEN Reforms. The discussion was productive and will feed into Ofsted's inspection planning. There is no judgement or published letter resulting from the Annual Conversation. The Annual Conversation for Education will take place in the Autumn Term.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

No specific implications for this report

4. CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED

- i. No specific implications for this report.

5. TIMETABLE

- i. No specific implications for this report.

6. FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS

- i. None

7. LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS

- i. None

8. HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS

- i. None

9. CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- i. None

10. RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

- i. None

11. APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT

A. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- i. None