

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL
11 MARCH 2020

(7.15 pm - 9.45 pm)

PRESENT Councillors Councillor Sally Kenny (in the Chair),
Councillor Hayley Ormrod, Councillor Agatha Mary Akyigyina,
Councillor Omar Bush, Councillor Edward Foley,
Councillor Jenifer Gould, Councillor Joan Henry,
Councillor James Holmes, Councillor Russell Makin and
Councillor Dennis Pearce

El Mayhew (Assistant Director, Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion), Karl Mittelstadt (Head of Policy, Performance and Partnerships), Keith Shipman (Head of Education Inclusion) and Rachael Wardell (Director, Children, Schools & Families Department)

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE (Agenda Item 1)

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Dave Ward (with Cllr Billy Christie as substitute) Cllr Marsie Skeete and Jane McSherry.

2 DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

There were no declarations of interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Agenda Item 3)

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

4 DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE (Agenda Item 4)

The Director of Children's, Schools and Families described the great success of Merton's first Annual Foster Carer Conference to the Panel.

5 CABINET MEMBER PRIORITIES (Agenda Item 5)

The Cabinet Members for Schools and Adult Education and Children's Services both gave verbal updates on their current priorities.

6 REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S' MENTAL HEALTH TASK GROUP (Agenda Item 6)

The Director of Children's, Schools and Families introduced the report and clarified Recommendations 5 and 7 – actions will not achieve stated objective of provision of training for anyone/every parent. Should read "further training will be scheduled based on need".

7 CORPORATE PARENTING (Agenda Item 7)

The Assistant Director for Children's Social Care and Youth Inclusion provided a summary of the Annual Report.

In response to Panel Members questions the AD explained;

- There is a local and national issue around court times. No authorities are currently meeting the 26-week deadline though Merton is performing better than our regional and PAN London Local Authorities.
- We will continue our work with families signed up to the Family Drug and Alcohol service.
- Case Management System (Mosaic) identified some inaccuracies so we are working with our I.T and performance teams to resolve this. When the data is accurate, it will be presented to Scrutiny.

8 SCHOOL STANDARDS - ANNUAL REPORT (Agenda Item 8)

The Head of School Improvement and the Social Inclusion Manager gave an overview of the report and pointed out areas of good performance, those requiring development and key priorities going forward.

In response to Panel Member questions, further details were provided by Officers as follows

- Schools are preparing a focused piece of work on permanent exclusions to analyse the rise in secondary school figures
- The 13% rise in home schooling figures is in line with the national figures/rise. There are a wide range of reasons as to why children are home schooled such as parental choice, poor attendance, mental health or not receiving their first choice for a school.
- The Local Authority have limited legal powers in terms of home schooled children but do undertake home visits and education reports. Visits will be conducted twice in the first year, and then annually thereafter, if the education is deemed appropriate. If it is not appropriate, visits will occur every three months. As well as the visits, other support is given in the form of self-help group details and helpful websites to use.
- ACTION: The Social Inclusion Manager agreed to distribute/bring the broader report about home schooling to Scrutiny later in the year once it has been produced.

9 PERFORMANCE MONITORING (Agenda Item 9)

The Head of Performance, Policy and Partnerships gave a commentary on the performance monitoring report.

ACTION: Electronic versions of handouts provided at the meeting to be distributed with the minutes.

10 PLANNING THE 2020/21 WORK PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 10)

The Chair reminded the Panel to submit their ideas for the upcoming topic suggestion workshops.