

THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 20TH FEBRUARY, 2023** at 6.00 pm in Committee Room 1, Crowndale Centre, 218 Eversholt Street, London, NW1 1BD

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT

Councillors Jenny Headlam-Wells (Chair), Lotis Bautista, Matt Cooper, Julian Fulbrook, Sylvia McNamara and Shah Miah

MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT

Councillors Andrew Parkinson and Shiva Tiwari

Co-opted Member Samir Quarshi

ALSO PRESENT

Councillor Marcus Boyland, Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families
Councillor Sabrina Francis, Cabinet Member for Young People and Culture
Councillor Nanouche Umeadi, Cabinet Adviser on Diversity Mission

The minutes should be read in conjunction with the agenda for the meeting. They are subject to approval and signature at the next meeting of the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee and any corrections approved at that meeting will be recorded in those minutes.

MINUTES

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received by Councillors Andrew Parkinson and Shiva Tiwari and Samir Quarshi.

2. DECLARATIONS BY MEMBERS OF PECUNIARY AND NON-PECUNIARY INTERESTS IN RESPECT OF ITEMS ON THIS AGENDA

There were no declarations.

3. ANNOUNCEMENTS (IF ANY)

Broadcast of the meeting

The Chair made the following announcement: "In addition to the rights by law that the public and press have to record this meeting, I would like to remind everyone that this meeting is being broadcast live by the Council to the Internet and can be viewed on our website for twelve months after the meeting. After that time, webcasts are archived and can be made available upon request."

If you have asked to address the meeting, you are deemed to be consenting to having your contributions recorded and broadcast, including video when switched on, and to the use of those sound recordings and images for webcasting and/or training purposes.”

4. DEPUTATIONS (IF ANY)

There were no deputations.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2023 be agreed as a correct record.

6. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES TO TAKE AS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

7. UPDATE OF THE CABINET MEMBER FOR BEST START FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Consideration was given to the update of the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families.

The paper outlined the following updates: the second meeting of the Education Strategy Board; the recent meeting of the Children’s Trust Partnership Board; Camden’s Takeover Day; Holiday and Food Programme update; Camden Music Programme and Albert Hall Concert; and Camden Council’s adult community learning service.

In response to a Member, the Cabinet Member stated that if contacted he could provide a fuller update on any specific questions about Camden’s Special Education Needs and Disability (SEND) provisions outside of the meeting.

The Committee noted the update.

8. SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT & STANDARDS 2021-22 SUMMARY

Consideration was given to the report of the CEO of Camden Learning.

The CEO of Camden Learning introduced the report and presented slides, included within the agenda, which set out: an executive summary of Camden’s school achievement and standards and Ofsted inspection update; outcomes by key stage and key groups; and attendance and exclusions. Camden schools had overall continued to perform well compared to national and London averages, however concerns remained over the impact of lost learning during the pandemic and the

continued attainment gaps for disadvantaged children. In addition, it was stated that the results presented were from the first external examinations since 2019, where in the interim period students had been majorly impacted by pandemic lockdowns and school absences which had a multitude of consequences for young people.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and invited questions and comments from the Committee. The following was discussed:

- Members praised the thorough report and detailed sections on ethnic groups, gender and intersectionality.
- It was confirmed that there was a working party group focussed on post-16 and how to retain high performing students in Camden schools. This was attended by Camden secondary school colleagues. Work had begun and there would be a report coming next year.
- Officers stated they would share information which explained the 'open bucket' subjects included in Key Stage 4 data to the Committee.

Action By – CEO Camden Learning

Disadvantaged Groups

- A Member commented that the Council should consider accessing external expert advice on how to support disadvantaged young Bangladeshi pupils in relation to attainment, because the challenges for some pupils had been reported for some years in Camden. This group was also disproportionately affected by the pandemic. In response, officers agreed the gaps that had existed for a long time were frustrating and complex. From an educational perspective, education in Britain had changed dramatically over the past 40 years, and then again in the past 10 years. There was now greater awareness, cultural engagement, and communication with communities which didn't exist in decades past. In Camden, Bangladeshi pupils were performing well in comparison to national statistics.
- In response to a Member asking if there was any targeted support for disadvantaged white British pupils, it was confirmed that attendance was a particular focus and ensuring that robust systems were in place to address persistent absences. Also, they were working on developing the curriculum to be more relevant for some groups.
- In relation to the next steps of focus to support Caribbean and Somali pupils, a Co-opted Member asked what social justice leadership would look like in Camden. In response, it was stated that there was a series of sessions planned themed on how to understand system social justice leadership, led by Professor Paul Miller who was a leading thinker in the subject area. All Camden school leaders were invited to attend.
- A Co-opted Member stated that it was overwhelmingly ethnic groups presented in the data who were suffering from a systematic disadvantage and suffering nonrelevant curriculum and relatability. They asked how that was being addressed and progress was being measured. A Member asked how Camden Learning was measuring the success of their main action points in this area. In response, it was confirmed that it was important to look at the data where Camden was performing strongly and not so strongly, down to individual groups and schools. Standards meetings were held with schools at the beginning of each

year and there were termly assessment windows where progress was discussed. There was work in trying to ensure the curriculum was relevant for Black, Asian and minority ethnic (BAME) students, that teachers were representative, schools were supporting high ambition for pupils, and that staff in schools understood systematic racism. There were targeted actions for different schools, as well as general wider development work taking place.

Early Years

- It was confirmed that the current Early Years screening process and phonics testing was expected to remain.
- In relation to Early Years Good Level of Development (GLD) variations, a Member asked if there was a plan in response to the increased gap. Secondly, they asked how the weaker writing outcomes would affect children later in their education. In response, it was confirmed the impact on writing and oracy skills of children during the pandemic was quite profound. To mitigate the affects there was a large focus on catch-up and a focus on those children who did not achieve the expected targets, backed up with funding and tutoring and adjustments to the curriculum in schools. At this stage, it was difficult to predict the long-term impact and they would be looking closely at achievement data in the following years.
- It was confirmed that there was disparity in Early Years profile measuring, which could act as a blunt and subjective measure. Camden Learning was working with some schools to improve assessment practices in monitoring and assessment.

Data Presentation

- A Co-opted Member commented that the gaps closing between KS2 and KS3 were not capturing the same cohort of children, because it was known that many higher attainer pupils left Camden schools between those stages. The Co-opted Member suggested it would be helped for this change to be shown in the data.
- A Co-opted Member stated they would like to see more variability data between schools and different areas of the borough, a particular example being able to see if children of the same ability perform differently between schools. Parents needed to be reassured their children would do well at any school in the borough. In response, it was stated there should be caution in comparing cohorts of children between schools, because this may reflect the varying of curriculums. Parents took into consideration many types of data when looking at prospective schools ranging from word of mouth through to Ofsted ratings. In addition, it was confirmed that Camden Learning had mobile pupil data which would be helpful to explore.

School Absences

- A Co-opted Member stated that school absence had always been an issue in Camden, particularly in secondary schools. They asked if it understood why this was a challenge in Camden, if mental health was a factor behind the trend, and if Camden Learning were facilitating peer-to-peer leaning hubs between schools to address the reasons sitting behind these absences. In response, it was stated that students who were at risk of absence and expulsion had often switched off from learning, complex factors that included teaching that may not have their needs or the curriculum was not perceived as relevant to them. This issue was

especially prevalent for some SEND students if they were unable to access tasks set by teachers. This was a complex challenge and schools had the influence to change and adapt the curriculum.

- In response to a Co-opted Member commenting that Camden Learning needed to address why some students were finding it hard to cope in the education system and enjoy learning, it was confirmed that one focus of Camden Learning was to look at the pastoral element of the curriculum. Education was about developing the whole child, including personal development. Also, there had been a mental health survey of children in Camden by the health and wellbeing team which showed pupils were under more pressure than ever.

Ofsted Inspections

- It was confirmed that before Ofsted inspections in schools, Camden Learning was aware of the risk areas for individual schools and they prepared them to aim for success.

Teacher and school staff wellbeing

- A Member stated that the health and wellbeing of teachers and support staff was not statutory data. They commented that the high cost of living and transport was having an impact on school staff, as well as all of the other challenges in the aftermath of the pandemic, and asked if Camden Learning considered this data. In response, it was stated that there were wellbeing surveys given to teachers which fed back to the health and wellbeing team. To retain teachers, Camden had to be a good place to work, as well as providing professional opportunities.

RESOLVED -

THAT the report be noted.

9. AN INVESTIGATION OF THE IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT OF EARLY YEARS CHILDREN IN CAMDEN

Consideration was given to the report of the Language Development Scrutiny Panel.

Councillor McNamara (Chair of the Panel) and Councillor Headlam-Wells introduced the report which investigated the impact on language development in Early Years children resulting from the disruptions to learning and social interaction during the pandemic years. The report outlined the details of the work completed by the Panel through their methodology and research; the findings and conclusions which addressed the key lines of enquiry; and how the Panel reached their final wide-ranging 13 conclusions.

During the process the Panel drew qualitative data by interviewing 49 Early Years practitioners (in 27 Early Years settings) and carried out a literature analysis, which gave a bearing on the national data and situation – all branches of research drew overwhelming and consistent key issues. It was noted that it was disproportionately disadvantaged children and SEND children who were impacted negatively by the pandemic. Members set out their future ambitions following on from the report; locally and nationally.

The Committee moved onto comments and questions and the following was discussed:

- A Co-opted Member praised the richness of the report and the wealth of data and information used in producing the recommendations.
- In relation to section 11.1 on the financial comments of the report, a Co-opted Member queried the fact that any recommendations within this report needed to be contained within the existing service funding envelope, and made the case that Camden had to be creative in making change. They firstly suggested it could be affective for children to repeat a school year, to allow them to have more time, as a valuable and cost-effective approach. They secondly suggested that schools could use fundraising as a cost neutral intervention, and asked if any similar initiatives were already happening in the borough. In response, it was confirmed that schools did have other funding sources and knowledge on delivering the interventions, however it was the lack of practitioners to deliver the interventions which was a significant barrier. They could look to volunteers, but it was the experienced practitioners who were really needed for the task.
- In response to a Co-opted Member commenting that every key stage of children had been affected by the pandemic, it was stated that a major finding of the research was the sheer number of Early Years children who required the significant enhanced support.
- A Member stated that it was helpful to understand the different reasons why children were experiencing challenges to understand the issue. They asked how the language development of children being born now would be affected by the huge cost of nursery and consequently children not being able to attend nursery due to economic circumstances, when considering the under-socialisation and reduced practitioner support. In response, it was agreed that this line of enquiry would be a good idea to pursue in future research. The key connections were childcare and education, and in this country there was a separation between the two which was not practiced in other European countries.

RESOLVED -

THAT the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee

1. consider, note, and endorse the contents of the report; and
2. agree to request the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families to prepare a response to the recommendations, to report back to the Committee.

10. EXPERIENCES OF MATERNITY SERVICES IN CAMDEN

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Healthwatch.

Lucy night, Healthwatch Communications Engagement Lead, introduced the Healthwatch Better Births Strategy report and recommendations, included within the papers. Healthwatch Camden gathered insight from local women and their experiences of using maternity services in Camden to identify gaps, putting forward

recommendations to support the well-being of women giving birth in Camden. The paper had already reported to the NHS trusts and the Integrated Care Board (ICB).

The Chair thanked Healthwatch for the report and invited questions and comments from the Committee. The following was discussed:

- In relation to training on race and ethnicity, a Co-opted Member asked how that training could be implemented and if there was any monitoring of progress as part of any recommendation. In response, Healthwatch stated that the recommendation for annual training was echoed from Birth Rights, a charity that existed to protect human rights during pregnancy and childbirth, who had carried out national work in 2022 on racial discrimination during pregnancy.
- In response to a Co-opted Member asking for additional information on the training and monitoring of nurses who had multiple incidences of poor care to ethnic minorities, it was clarified that Healthwatch did not set out what should be included in the training, but should be guided by expert charities in the field. Additionally, a recommendation from Healthwatch was there should be consistent training between trusts.
- A Member stated that Camden's child population was declining and asked what a long-term strategy was in addressing the underutilisation of resources and the implications. It was confirmed that Healthwatch would provide a response to the Committee outside of the meeting. A Co-opted Member asked how the report intersected with The First 1001 Days work. It was confirmed that Healthwatch would provide a response to the Committee outside of the meeting.

Actions By – Director of Healthwatch

The Director of Public Health updated the Board that in June 2022, North Central London (NCL) ICB and a range of partners began a case for change in neonatal paediatric services. The population across NCL was changing, with a declining birth rate, which raised the question of where babies should be born and that they needed to improve and make better use of maternity services across the area and between trusts. The work had started with extensive consultation and options reviewing in producing The Case for Change, published in 2022. The next step was a neonatal impact assessment, looking at inequalities and the different range of interdependencies between options, to be published in Autumn 2023. The paper would then report to the Mayor's Office for review, and then another consultation would commence to see if there was a need for an integrated business case. The Director of Public Health stated that the Committee could bring this piece of work back to scrutiny for consideration.

RESOLVED -

THAT the report be noted.

11. USING CAREERS EDUCATION TO BUILD THE NEXT GENERATION OF DIVERSE LEADERS

Consideration was given to the report of the Cabinet Adviser on Diversity Mission.

Councillor Nanouche Umeadi, Cabinet Adviser on Diversity Mission, introduced the report which focussed on supporting the next generation of diverse leaders. The report looked at how the Council could go further in developing opportunities, providing guidance to young people, and promoting leadership skills for young people from BAME backgrounds. The recommendations focussed on improving the existing models within Camden and increasing the number of employers in Camden to provide opportunities, particularly for young people from lower income families. The final recommendations of the report, once considered by scrutiny, would later be considered by Cabinet.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and invited questions and comments from the Committee. The following was discussed:

- Members praised the rich and extensive research and ambition set out in the report.
- It was confirmed that over the course of the research it was clear that disadvantage in accessing opportunities was also evident across other groups, such as white working class young people, and the recommendations would also create opportunities for those other groups.
- In response to a Member asking if a gender or racial divide had been observed in the research, it was stated that in general girls were more aspirational than boys, who tended to limit themselves. From this, it was evident there needed to be more male Black and Asian role models. You could draw from the research that it was middle class young people who took up the more exciting opportunities that currently existed.
- It was confirmed that data was not collected on whether the young people involved in the research were pupil premium or eligible for free school meals.
- In relation to section 4.3, it was noted that the impressive network of Camden STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Maths) was run by 3-4 people, and the reach of the benefit and value they added in providing opportunities for young people in the borough could be boosted by increased funding.

RESOLVED -

THAT the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee

1. note the report of Councillor Nanouche Umeadi, Cabinet Adviser for Diversity Mission; and
2. discuss and comment on the recommendations made by the Cabinet Adviser, which will be incorporated in a report to Cabinet.

12. ANNUAL HEALTH UPDATE ON CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES

Consideration was given to the report of the Director of Public Health.

Kirsten Watters, Director of Public Health, introduced the report. The report provided an update on Camden's performance and activity against key health indicators relating to services for children and young people. Comparison data had been taken from Office for Health Improvement and Disparities (OHID) Fingertips Child, the Maternal Health data dashboard and other local data. The report set out the progress to date which positively reflected the work to deliver Our Camden Plan and the Camden 2025 vision for people to lead healthy, independent lives. This was the first report where Public Health and Integrated Children's Commissioning had joined together.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and invited questions and comments from the Committee. The following was discussed:

- A Member asked how children and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) usage varied between different young people, commenting that biggest factor for young people getting involved in knife crime was poor mental health and that young black boys who were at the biggest risk to knife crime. They asked if Public Health was seeing this group use CAHMS as much as other groups, or if there was there a gap in provision. The Director of Public Health said they would provide data on the intersectionality of CAMHS and the different types of referrals of support, such as trauma informed training and across other settings, to the Committee.

Action By – Director of Public Health

- It was stated that the issue and concern of adolescents vaping was addressed in the statutory Public Health Annual Report, separate to the Annual Health Update on Children, Young People and Families.
- It was confirmed that the First 1001 days was a priority of the NHS.
- In Camden, good health was recorded in Early Years and children, however was not seen to continue in the same way to adolescents and they would need to look at the policy support focus offer for adolescents.

RESOLVED -

THAT the report be noted.

13. WE MAKE CAMDEN: STATE OF THE BOROUGH REPORT

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Directors Supporting People, Supporting Communities and Corporate Services.

James Coumbe, Portfolio Lead, introduced the report. The report provided an update on the development of the annual State of the Borough report, explained its purpose

and origins, the findings of the first iteration the report, and sought input from the Committee in relation to the data in the remit of children, schools and families. The report would later seek approval of Council.

The Chair thanked officers for the report and invited questions and comments from the Committee. The following was discussed:

- Member praised the report and commented that it covered many bases and was a broad source of information.
- In response to a Co-opted Member querying how the Council thought they were performing in the areas set out, it was confirmed that this paper was not a performance report and was a neutral data set. The first iteration of the report was a starting point and a baseline to set out what was known about life in the borough. The document was a source of information for scrutiny committees in responding to headings within the We Make Camden strategy.

RESOLVED -

THAT the Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee

1. note and comment on the contents of the report and comment on any additional data or evidence that could add value to the aims of the report; and
2. refer the final version of the report on to Council for consideration.

14. CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

Consideration was given to the report of the Executive Director Supporting People.

The Executive Director Supporting People outlined the work programme for the 2023-24 municipal year. The following suggestions were made by Committee Members for topics to be included in the future work programme:

- Teachers and school staff wellbeing
- BAME school governor representation

RESOLVED -

THAT that the report be noted.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE MEETING DATES

The provisional meeting dates for the 2023/24 municipal year, as listed in the agenda, were noted.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR DECIDES TO CONSIDER AS URGENT

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm.

CHAIR

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MINUTES END