

## **THE LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN**

At a meeting of the **CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** held on **MONDAY, 22ND MARCH, 2021** at 5.30 pm in Remote meeting via Microsoft Teams.

### **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT**

Councillors Oliver Lewis (Chair), Nasim Ali, Julian Fulbrook, Alison Kelly, Samata Khatoon, Stephen Stark and Co-opted members Margaret Harvey, Reverend Guy Pope, Imogen Sharp and Rachel Wrangham

### **MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE ABSENT**

Councillors Gail McAnena, Shiva Tiwari and Co-opted Member Camden Youth Council representative

**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. GUIDANCE ON REMOTE MEETINGS HELD DURING THE CORONAVIRUS NATIONAL EMERGENCY**

#### **RESOLVED**

THAT the guidance be noted.

**To Note: All**

#### **2. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Tiwari. Councillor Fulbrook gave apologies for lateness.

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

No declarations were made.

#### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair announced the following:

‘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 six months after the meeting. After that time, webcasts are archived and can be made available on DVD 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.’

#### **5. DEPUTATIONS ( IF ANY)**

The Chair informed the committee that there had been a request for a deputation regarding item 8 on this agenda but it was late and would not be heard. The Chair had told the deputation group that he would remind the committee of the points they had made in their recent deputations to the scrutiny committee about the closure of Carlton School.

#### **6. MINUTES**

##### **RESOLVED**

THAT the minutes of the last meeting held on Monday 22 February 2021 be agreed as a correct record.

**To Note: All**

#### **7. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS THAT THE CHAIR DECIDES TO TAKE AS URGENT**

There was no urgent business.

## **8. DETERMINATION OF THE STATUTORY NOTICE RELATING TO THE FUTURE ORGANISATION OF RHYL AND CARLTON PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

Consideration was given to a report of the Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families

Following the Cabinet decision to approve the publication of a statutory notice detailing a proposal to merge Rhyl and Carlton Primary Schools, through the closure of Carlton School as a legal entity, a notice was published on 21 January 2021 with a representation period lasting until 18 February 2021.

The Council had received 32 representations to the statutory notice that were included in Appendix 3 to the report. It was clear from the responses that Carlton School and were highly regarded and played an important part in the community, offering vital links for children and families. There was genuine concern about the future organisation of school places, the potential impact that this could have on children and a sadness about the circumstances that have brought about the proposal for change.

Having considered the responses officers had developed the proposal with the firm belief that it offered the best opportunity to provide outstanding education over the long-term. Should the Cabinet agree to implement the proposal then the school organisation changes would take place from September 2021.

The following points were made during consideration of the report:

- The Chair outlined the concerns and points about the closure of Carlton School that had been raised by recent deputations to this scrutiny committee. These included not wanting the merger to go ahead, the impact on the pupils at Carlton School, lack of engagement with parents, low response to the consultation and the impact on the local community
- Assuming the merger of the schools went ahead what opportunities would there be for community involvement?
- A difficult decision to be made and distressing for the parents. How accessible had the consultation been and was there any breakdown on the ethnicity of those that had responded?
- Why had the financial information requested by the community alternative proposal to the scheme not been provided?
- What provision was in place for pupils at Carlton School to catch up with education?
- How many applications for schools places had been made to what would be the merged Carlton Rhyl School for 2021?
- What funding commitment had been made for the community hub proposal for the next 5 years?
- What steps had been taken to support the mental health and wellbeing of the pupils and parents that would be affected by the proposals?

***Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee - Monday, 22nd March, 2021***

- How do we ensure the success of the merger and what other schools were at risk of closure?
- A school governor co-opted member of the committee spoke from personal experience of the difficult decision to close a school and said that the Council had managed it well. Having a Choice Manager to look at the needs of the children had been helpful. Once they had settled at a new school, parents who had been concerned about the proposals were delighted. The longer the delay the more stressful and unsettling it is for pupils.

The following points were then made in response to comments from the committee:

- Representatives from the community, parents and children and the Chair of Governors of both schools would be part of the discussions about the development of a community hub on the Carlton School site. Discussions were already taking place but it would not have been appropriate for officers to provide support before the Council reached a decision on Carlton and Rhyl Schools
- There was acknowledgement of how upset people were about the proposals and extensive steps had been taken in the consultation with parents about the merger of the schools. Information in community languages, engagement with a significant number of local organisations and six days of meetings where interpreters were available. It had been a widely publicised engagement programme but this had not been reflected in the number of people who had responded to the consultation. The second stage of the consultation was a much more formal process of setting out the statutory notices, all parents at the schools and local community groups were written to, community language were used for notices
- There had not been an analysis of the ethnicity of the respondents to the consultation
- The alternative proposal for Carlton School to continue as a one form entry school was not possible, there were not enough pupils in each school year for this to be feasibly funded
- This had been a difficult year for all pupils and measures were being taken to ensure that children catch up. The Head Teachers of both schools had made a commitment to a carefully managed period of transition if the proposals were agreed by the Cabinet
- Information about the confirmed number of school places in the admission process for 2021/22 was not available yet
- The Council had a long term commitment the Carlton School community and the future of the area. The legacy of Carlton School will be retained

*Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee - Monday, 22nd March, 2021*

- The Council will work with pupils, parents and the schools to support them through the transition. Support to parents will be available, signposting them to support as needed. Discussions about the community hub on the Carlton School site had included an early years children's centre with a focus on psychological support to families
- There was every confidence the proposal, if granted, would be successful. A great deal of careful planning was taking place and Carlton and Rhyl Schools would work together to make it a success.
- Some staff will be made redundant but will be supported as much as possible. Prolonging the process will make it more stressful for everyone
- A choice manager would be part of the transition arrangements. There would also be special educational needs and disabilities support for pupils transitioning as part of the continuity arrangements
- School place planning was regularly kept under review to make sure there were sufficient school places for the population

The Chair thanked the parent and community deputations for their contribution to the recent meetings where this committee had considered reports on the Carlton School and Rhyl School merger. The difficult decision to merge the schools had been acknowledged and the measures to support the pupils and parents in the proposed transition arrangements were welcomed. The continued commitment to the local community on the future of the Carlton School site and the community hub proposals was noted.

**RESOLVED**

THAT the report be noted.

**To Note: All**

**Action By: Cabinet Member for Best Start for Children and Families**

## **9. CAMDEN LEARNING ACHIEVEMENT AND STANDARDS 2019/20 SUMMARY**

Consideration was given to a presentation from the Director of Camden Learning that provided an analysis of the attainment and achievement of pupils in Camden schools in 2019-20. In addition to the analysis and information about results and performance, it also identified some key areas of development and priorities for the future. As part of their consideration of the report the committee received a summary presentation (**Appendix A**) that included:

- Phonics (2019 & 2020) summary
- Key Stage 2 - Attainment (2019)
- Key Stage 4 - Attainment 8 (2020)
- Key Stage 4 - Attainment (2020)
- Post 16 - level 3 APS
- Disadvantages Pupils KS4 (2020)
- Ethnic Groups Summary - KS4 (2020)
- Somali Pupils KS4 (2020)
- White British Disadvantaged - KS4 (2020)
- Gender –KS4 (2020) strong/standard pass
- Attendance by Sector (from September 2020)
- Attendance of Vulnerable Pupils (from September 2020)
- Exclusions (2019/20)
- Reasons for Exclusion
- Exclusions by Ethnicity (2019/20)

The Chair welcomed the information that had been provide in the presentation and thanked Camden Schools for all their work during the lockdowns and the Coronavirus National Emergency.

The following information was provided in response to questions raised during consideration of the presentation:

- The gaps in attainment have changed and this could be due to the way they have been assessed, different learning styles or systemic bias. This last year has challenged how standards are measured and young people have questioned the flexibility and relevance of the syllabus
- Centre Assessed Grades were used in 2020 and the technical details are still awaited
- Camden children and young people will be supported with any gaps in learning and catching up

- The collaboration across the Camden family of schools has been stronger than ever during the past year and has included secondary schools moderating together
- The data in the presentation is data from schools that is shared with their agreement
- Areas of focus for the next year included: differentials in English and Mathematics, working with the Richard Reeves Foundation, holiday time provision/support, gendered subject choices and the National Tutoring programme
- Measures were in place to ensure that children and families dealing with exclusion, domestic violence and financial difficulties remained visible, safe and supported
- Work was taking place on the school exclusion scrutiny panel recommendations and there would be a report back to this committee
- Primary and secondary school colleagues were part of a focus group for Year 6 to Year 7 planning the transition from primary to secondary school, with a comprehensive summer programme of activities
- The end of this school year for GCSE and A Level students would vary depending on their courses, virtual work experience and summer programme activities

The Chair thanked Jon Abbey Director of Camden Learning and Christine Gilbert Chair of Learning Board for attending.

This was a very unusual year with a great deal of detailed analysis taking place to support the recovery needed by Camden children and young people.

## **RESOLVED**

THAT the presentations be noted.

### **To Note: All**

#### **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING AND FUTURE MEETING DATES**

The Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee noted the provisional meeting dates for the 2021/22 municipal year. Meetings would take place at 6.30pm on:

- Thursday 1 July 2021
- Wednesday 1 September 2021
- Monday 8 November 2021
- Tuesday 14 December 2021
- Tuesday 18 January 2022
- Tuesday 1 March 2022

**To Note: All**

**11. ANY OTHER BUSINESS THE CHAIR DECIDES TO CONSIDER AS URGENT**

There was no such business.

The meeting ended at 7.10 pm.

**CHAIR**

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**MINUTES END**