MINUTES OF
CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 21 March 2018
(7:04 - 9:21 pm)

Present: Cllr Elizabeth Kangethe (Chair), Cllr Irma Freeborn, Cllr Syed Ghani, Cllr Adegojega Oluwole and Cllr Danielle Smith;

Also Present: Georgia Harley, Cllr Evelyn Carpenter and Cllr Jane Jones

Apologies: Cllr Syed Ahammad, Mrs Ingrid Robinson

27. Declaration of Members' Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

28. Appointments / Resignations

The Select Committee noted that Dr Jo Finch, Parnet Governor Representatives (Secondary), had resigned from the Committee.

29. Minutes (22 January 2018)

The minutes of the meeting held on 22 January 2018 were confirmed as correct.

30. Improving the Employability Prospects of Barking and Dagenham's Young People

The Group Manager - Integrated Youth Services, 14-19 Participation & Engagement, introduced a report on ‘Improving the Employability Prospects of Barking and Dagenham’s Young People’

The Select Committee had undertaken a scrutiny review on the subject and the final report was attached to the report at Appendix A.

The Group Manager gave a presentation to the Select Committee and reported that the recommendations of the CSSC as an outcome of the scrutiny review was key to changes leading to improvements in the offer work-related learning, work experience and apprenticeships.

Following the presentation, the Select Committee thanked the Group Manager and his team for their hard work in producing the final scrutiny review document.

The Select Committee resolved to approve the final scrutiny report titled ‘Improving the Employability Prospects of Barking and Dagenham’s Young People’.

31. Child Sexual Exploitation Briefing

The Commissioning Director, Children’s Care and Support introduced a report which provided an overview and analysis of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in
Barking and Dagenham.

The report focussed on updating the Select Committee on:

- what was known;
- what had been done and what the impact was; and
- what challenged were being faced.

The reported figures of CSE were increasing as officers were able to identify the indicators of CSE better and people were more confident in coming forward. It was noted that the majority of councils in the Country had received an increase in reported cases.

With regard to the broad national profile, the Select Committee noted that white young women were often the victims and older non-white groups of men were the perpetrators. Within Barking and Dagenham, the perpetrators were classed as peer on peer (often under the age of 20 and in gangs).

In discussing the forthcoming refreshed CSE Strategy, the Select Committee noted that although the ability to respond was robust and strong, the challenge was to focus more on how to identify those at risk better in order to prevent exploitation. Work needed to be undertaken with families to help the spot the differences between general teenage behaviour and potential CSE. Officers were aware that a balance would need to be struck between raising awareness with families and causing undue fear.

Detective Superintendent (DS) John Ross and (CI) Chief Inspector Maxine Blackledge were in attendance to discuss CSE and the work the Metropolitan Police were undertaking.

DS Ross explained that while there were robust and established child protection procedures in place, it was more complicated in the Borough as a lot of the cases reported were peer on peer abuse and often, those who were victims did not necessarily consider themselves victims.

With regard to the perpetrators of CSE, CI Blackledge advised that there was a perpetrator focussed team whose work including raising the awareness of CSE with emergency response colleagues and working with other Boroughs to identify perpetrators in other Boroughs.

In response to questions, the Select Committee were advised that:

- A large amount of work on CSE education was being delivered in secondary schools, which was confirmed by the BAD Youth Forum Deputy Chair;
- More CSE education needed to be delivered in primary schools, at an appropriate level; and
- More focus on the education of young perpetrators (or potential perpetrators) was required as well as victim support.

The Select Committee were aware that the victims of CSE were not just female, but also male. In that regard Members asked for further thought to be given to the provision of a ‘boys only’ room at the new Youth Centre in the Borough to ensure boys had the same opportunity as girls to talk to their peers about any issues they
may have.

The report was noted.

*Standing Order 7.1 (Chapter 3, Part 2 of the Council Constitution) was suspended at this juncture to enable the meeting to continue beyond the 9pm threshold.*

32. **Vote of Thanks to Co-optees and BAD Youth Forum Representatives**

The Lead Member proposed a vote of thanks to the co-optees and the BAD Youth Forum representatives for their valuable input and hard work over the last year.

The Select Committee resolved to agree a vote of thanks to the co-optees and the BAD Youth Forum Representatives.

33. **Social Care and Education Performance Report**

The Commissioning Director, Children’s Care and Support, introduced a report to the Select Committee which provided an overview and analysis of the latest performance trends in the Children’s Care and Support portfolio areas.

The report brought to the Select Committee’s attention those key performance indicators that had been flagged as areas of concern, for example, indicators that were rated Amber or Red (middle and lower quartile position).

The performance indicators covered in the report represented the headline measures across statutory social care and education standards, including 16 performance outcomes report to senior management and Portfolio Lead Members.

In particular, the Commissioning Director drew members attention to:

- The number and rate of social care referrals, which was lower than London, national and statistical neighbour rates;
- Repeat social care referrals, which was in line with the London average however below the national and similar area averages;
- The number and rate of children on child protection plans, which was higher than London, national and similar areas; and
- School attainment levels, which had showed significant improvement and achievement in 2017.

The report was noted.

34. **Councillor John White**

The Lead Member expressed her condolences for Councillor John White who had recently passed away.

Councillor White was Lead Member for CSSC between 2014 to 2016 and had passed on his knowledge to members. He would be greatly missed by colleagues and officers.