

**LONDON BOROUGH OF TOWER HAMLETS**

**MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN AND EDUCATION SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE**

**HELD AT 6.33 P.M. ON THURSDAY, 8 DECEMBER 2022**

**COMMITTEE ROOM ONE - TOWN HALL, MULBERRY PLACE, 5 CLOVE CRESCENT, LONDON, E14 2BG**

**Members Present in Person:**

Councillor Bodrul Choudhury  
Councillor Ahmodul Kabir  
Councillor Ana Miah  
Councillor Shubo Hussain

**Members In Attendance Virtually:**

Councillor Abdul Wahid

**Cooptee's Present in Person:**

Shiblu Miah	Muslim community Representative
Dr Phillip Rice	Church of England Representative
Joanna Hannan	Diocese of Westminster Representative
Ashraf Zaman	Parent Governor
Nafisa Ahmed	Parent Governor

**Others Present in Person:**

Brenda Landers	Headteacher – Swanlea School
Kabir Miah	Deputy Headteacher – Swanlea School
Sornnaly Hossain	Our Time Youth Forum

**Others In Attendance Virtually:**

Colin Eaton	Financial Services Compensation Scheme
Asnan Mojumader	Apprenticeship Generation Manager

**Officers Present in Person:**

Filuck Miah	(Strategy and Policy Officer, Strategy, Improvement and Transformation Service)
Jenny Miller	Manager - Family Information and Support Service
Steve Nyakatawa	(Director of Education)
Lewis Teasdale	(SEN Manager)
James Thomas	(Corporate Director, Children and Culture)

Farhana Zia

(Democratic Services Officer, Committees, Governance)

**Officers In Attendance Virtually:**

Aelswith Frayne

(Head of Employment and Skills)

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Abdul Wahid, who joined the meeting virtually due to ill health.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of pecuniary interests were declared by the members.

**3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING AND ACTION LOG**

The minutes of the previous meeting of 13<sup>th</sup> October 2022 were agreed to be an accurate record of the meeting and were approved by the Sub-Committee.

The Sub-Committee also noted the actions recorded in the action log.

**4. REPORTS FOR CONSIDERATION**

**4.1 Education Spotlight**

The Sub-Committee heard from Ms Brenda Landers, Headteacher at Swanlea School and Mr Kabir Miah, Deputy Headteacher. They reflected on how students from varying backgrounds succeed in attaining a good set of grades.

The main points to note from the presentation of Ms Landers and Mr Miah were:

- The school had a Leadership Development programme, whereby it identified future leaders from its cohort of teachers and worked with THEP (Tower Hamlets Education Partnership) to develop skills of teachers/leaders.
- Children who attend Swanlea School came from a wide range of backgrounds with 5.5% from disadvantage backgrounds, who go on to Russell Group universities.
- The school instils a positive learning attitude to give students social confidence and doesn't use disadvantage backgrounds as an excuse to success.

In response to comments and questions from members the following was noted:

- Ms Landers confirmed they shared best practice with other secondary schools as well as primary schools, via the THEP partnership.
- Ms Landers said that whilst the school had a traditional academic pathway, it also supported young people via the vocational route. Through its SEND Department it identified young people/carers who may require additional support to learn life skills such as independent living and financial awareness courses. Mr Miah added the arts and crafts faculty at the schools helped to build social confidence of students who had varying needs.
- Ms Landers stated she was incredibly proud of the achievement that her school had made. She said that the bottom 25%, through progress 8, meant that every student counts. She said the intake of the school as a comprehensive school depended on parent choice however 94% of students achieved a grade 4 or above in English. Of the 6% that do not make the grade, she said was important to recognise this and support them through alternative pathways.
- She said it was a laudable objective and aim to get youngsters to think about attending Russell Group Universities however many lack the confidence to think about attending Oxford/Cambridge Universities. She said this attitude needed to change and aspiration to attend university ought to be instilled in youngsters from a primary school age. Ms Landers said she believed it was too late leaving this until a child had entered secondary school education. She said these conversations ought to be happening at an early stage, in order to build confidence in a young person that they are just as able to attend prestigious universities.

The Chair thanked Ms Brenda Landers and Mr Kabir Miah for their presentation.

The Sub-Committee then heard from Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Lead for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning who introduced the presentation given by Mr Steve Nyakatawa, Director of Education.

Mr Nyakatawa referred members of the Sub-Committee to the presentation in the supplementary pack and said that as part of the Council's Strategic Plan priorities, the ambition was 'Every child achieves their best in education.' Mr Nyakatawa explained the performance tables for each Key Stage and said for KS1 and KS2, the borough was doing reasonably well however there were

dips in performance because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Mr Nyakatawa said the A level results on page 14 of the supplementary pack showed the borough was not doing as well when compared to other London Boroughs.

In response to comments and questions the following was noted:

- Mr Nyakatawa explained that the 'A' level results were lower than that of other boroughs as many students go across to other boroughs to attend sixth form and further education colleges. He said they were looking at best practice and were working to retain students within the borough.
- KS1 and KS2 results had decreased partly due to the pandemic however measures are in place to ensure results in reading, phonics and maths improve with increased monitoring and evaluation being done.
- Mr Nyakatawa said they work with schools to drive improvements and those that do not fall within the remit of the Local Authority, such as maintained schools or academies, then they are directly contacted via the London Director.
- In reference to Ebacc, Mr Nyakatawa said this gave students a boarder range of subjects to study and students who studied for the Ebacc were better placed for further and higher education. He said he'd like to see the performance figures improve for Ebacc study.

The Chair thanked Mr Nyakatawa for his presentation.

Lastly, Ms Aelswith Frayne, Head of Employment & Skills, Mr Colin Eaton from Financial Services Compensation Scheme and Mr Asnan Mojumader, Apprenticeship Generation Manager gave a presentation on how they are assisting young people into employment and career opportunities.

In response to comments and questions from members the following was noted:

- The Council Internship for young carers is being revived and there is a programme to offer 12 internships from January 2023. Funding for the pilot project needs agreement by the Corporate Leadership Team.
- Consideration is also being given to Services converting job vacancies into apprenticeships in hard to fill services/professions such as housing, planning and finance.
- Ms Frayne said the Employment and Skills Service did have performance targets to get people into work of 4 per month which was monitored corporately.

The Chair thanked Ms Frayne and her colleagues for their presentation.

## 4.2 SEND Statement of Action

The Sub-Committee heard from Ms Sornnaly Hossain from Our Time Youth Forum. Ms Hossain was supported by Ms Jenny Miller, manager of the Family Information and Support Service.

Ms Hossain gave an account of her experience of the education system in Tower Hamlets as someone with SEND needs. She explained the bullying she had experienced and how the forum had helped her gain confidence to stand up to those who bullied her. She explained how this had affected her mental health. She said she was a member of the SEND Improvement Board and felt it was important to voice her opinions especially to managers responsible, to bring about change.

In response to comments and questions from members the following was noted:

- Bullying should be taken seriously by teachers and parents. There was a lack of acceptance of SEND children and attitudes needed to change.
- In reference to the earlier discussion about where students choose to study for further education, Ms Hossain said she would encourage young people to attend out of borough settings as this built their confidence and independence.
- Members expressed their appreciation for Ms Hossain and her inspiring presentation.

The Chair thanked Ms Hossain for her presentation.

Councillor Maium Talukdar, Deputy Mayor and Cabinet Lead for Education, Youth and Lifelong Learning introduced the SEND presentation stating a review of the Council's progress against the Statement of action in response to the SEND Inspection in 2021 would be presented by Mr Steve Nyakatawa, Head of Education and Mr Lewis Teasdale, SEN Manager.

Mr Lewis Teasdale took members through the presentation outlining the existing priorities for the service and said these had been categorised into priority 1,2, 3,4 and 5. He explained the progress made against each priority and said the feedback from the second formal review with the DfE and NHSE in September and the forthcoming meeting in January 2023 would help build the evidence for the actions listed in the written statement of actions.

In response to comments and questions from members the following was noted:

- Mr Lewis said there had been an increase in demand for SEND services since the pandemic. Each case is assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- Mr Lewis acknowledged provision within the borough was spread out and said they were looking at ways to provide a 'blended' service,

where a child with mild or lesser autistic needs could be provided with care within a school setting as well as spending half a day at a specialist facility. He said the right balance was required.

- Mr Nyakatawa made reference to the one minute guides and said this provided a useful summary of ECHP plans, education provision and the integrated commissioning arrangements within the borough.

The Chair thanked Mr Nyakatawa and Mr Lewis for their presentation.

## 5. SUB-COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair, Councillor Choudhury referred members to the Sub-Committee's work programme for 2022-23 and asked members if they had any comments or questions relating to the work scheduled for the sub-committee to scrutinise.

- No comments or questions were asked in relation to the work programme.

The Sub-Committee **RESOLVED** to:

1. **NOTE** and **AGREE** the work programme for the upcoming meetings for 2022-23.

## 6. ANY OTHER UNRESTRICTED BUSINESS CONSIDERED TO BE URGENT

There was no other business to be discussed.

The meeting ended at 8.58 p.m.

Chair, Councillor Bodrul Choudhury  
Children and Education Scrutiny Sub-Committee