

**People Committee****4 July 2019****PEOPLE COMMITTEE****4 July 2019 at 7.00 pm**

**MEMBERS:** Councillor Marian James (Chair), Councillor Jenny Batt (Vice-Chair) and Councillor Chris Williams (Vice-Chair) and Councillors Barry Lewis, Trish Fivey, Martin Gonzalez, Mo Saqib, Tom Drummond, Jane Pascoe, Lily Bande and Elliot Colburn

**ABSENT** Councillor(s) Annie Moral and Moira Butt

**1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The Chair, Councillor Marian James, welcomed those present.

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Moira Butt and Annie Moral with Councillors Tom Drummond and Barry Lewis attending as substitute members. Apologies were also received from Reverend Kevin Lewis.

**3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Agenda item 6. Update on the High Needs Block Review, Councillor Lily Bande, Non Pecuniary, as a teacher at Eagle House School.

**4. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** that the minutes of the meeting held on 14 March 2019 be agreed as an accurate record.

**5. REPORT ON PETITION FOR AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF THE SUTTON EHCP PROCESS**

Councillor Marian James, Chair of the committee gave a statement outlining that: the SEND service was an improving service and not a failing service. To add to the momentum of improvement Officers would be looking directly at the Council's relationship with the external provider of the service with the Interim Strategic Director of People taking on a Non Executive Director role on the Cognus board along with other Officers of the Council. A review, supported by an independent expert, would focus on the progress of improvement plans, Cognus' alignment with statutory services and whether the division of responsibilities between the Council and Cognus were the best operating model to deliver education services.

Mr Gill presented the petition on behalf of the petitioners. He stated that petitioners felt there had been leadership failures in the local authority and Cognus and he requested an independent review, including all decisions to reject applications for an Education Health and Care Needs Assessment between Dec 2017 and March 2019. He raised concerns about the current ECHP processes and scrutiny of Cognus

In response to questions from Members Mr Gill added that plans were still being issued without all the information required and that a previously retracted policy document had yet to be replaced.

Fiona Phelps, Assistant Director Education and SEND outlined the Officer response to the petition stating: the contract management of Cognus has been strengthened, there were steps in place including review meetings, mediation and the right of appeal when parents and carers were concerned about decisions made. The Sutton Parent Forum and Sutton Information and Advice Support Service were additional support mechanisms available. The planned independent review will strengthen improvement work already being done together with a review of the Council's relationship with Cognus and whether the current arrangements were the best operating model to deliver education services.

In response to questions from members the Assistant Director Education and SEND explained the feedback from the Department for Education and NHS England highlighted a demonstrable improvement and that leaders had shown a clear understanding of both the progress made and the further improvements required. Council Officers could be appointed to the Cognus board and this would ensure that the Council could direct the company in relation to statutory requirements. Officers advised that it was not an issue of volume and cost in reviewing the decisions requested by the petitioners but more the appropriateness considering the statutory time limit for appeal had passed and the relevancy of evidence considered at the time. This was considered in the continuum of SEN support and provisions. The Assistant Director recognised that this was an emotional process and difficult for parents and carers and that the service needed to work with parents and carers focusing on communication and co-production. It was acknowledged that improvements needed to continue and at pace.

**RESOLVED:**

That it be noted an independent expert will be appointed to support the Strategic Director of People on leading a review of Cognus activities as set out in this report.

**6. UPDATE ON THE HIGH NEEDS BLOCK REVIEW**

Fiona Phelps, Assistant Director Education and SEND introduced the report. A point of order was raised in relation to Article 2 of the Constitution, Decision Making. Members were advised that the report was for information and there was no procedural breach. An additional briefing on the specific findings of the review and the establishment of Sutton Education Partnership would be circulated to all members.

In response to questions members were advised that earlier intervention, both before and when at school, was key in supporting children and young people with high needs. The Education Partnership was being developed to support a joint understanding of, and responsibility for, the work required, focusing on the principles of co-production. The consultant headteacher role was predicted to be needed initially for up to 18 months to develop the plan and take forward necessary action. The High Needs Block Review had taken longer than anticipated due to the varied educational landscape in Sutton, the comprehensive level of engagement required to effectively review the use of the High Needs Block, and to bring all partners along in the journey.

**RESOLVED:**

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That the findings of the review and direction of travel as set out in the report be noted and that a further update report be received at the next People Committee in October.

**Note:** in accordance with committee procedure rule 15.4 Councillors Bande, Colburn and Drummond requested that their abstention from the vote be recorded.

**7. UPDATE ON THE SEND WRITTEN STATEMENT OF ACTION**

Fiona Phelps, Assistant Director Education and SEND introduced the report. In response to questions Officers committed to providing a breakdown of SENDIST appeals in terms of how they had been resolved. In terms of the 27 actions identified in the written statement of action it was only the high needs block review which was outstanding as explained in the previous item.

Members requested a presentation at the next meeting on the local offer, to which officers agreed to do. The Chair requested that it would be helpful to have the WSOA presented in table form.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the achievements to date be noted and the work that is being undertaken to deliver the Written Statement of Action since its publication on 23 July 2018 and since the last report in March 2019 be endorsed.
2. That progress report / update be received at the next People Committee in October 2019 and in future meetings, to ensure oversight and scrutiny of the completion of the Written Statement of Action.

**8. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY ASSURANCE REPORT**

Jonathan Williams, Assistant Director Children's Services, introduced the report. Members discussed with Officers, the rate of children subject to Child Protection Section 47 investigations, child protection plan rate, whether there were any specific causes for reviews of child protection cases being rescheduled for key professionals to attend and the looked after children rate.

**RESOLVED:**

That the information contained in the report and Appendix A be noted in order to inform and improve performance and practice.

**9. SUTTON LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS**

Emma Cockerell Head of Commissioning, Quality and Practice introduced the report. In response to questions Officers advised that member training on corporate parenting was planned for January.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the responsibility for the Local Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements rests with the three safeguarding partners (Local Authority, Clinical Commissioning Group, Police) who have a shared and equal duty under Working Together 2018 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the local area, be noted

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- 2. That the overview of changes in statutory responsibilities under Working Together 2018 guidance in the attached Local Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements be noted.
- 3. That the new local child safeguarding partnership governance and organisational structure for the London Borough of Sutton to implement the local arrangements be noted.
- 4. That it be noted the Sutton Local Safeguarding Children Board ceased to exist when the new Sutton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements came into effect on 1 July 2019. Under the new arrangements, there is still a Board that has representation from the three statutory partners with education providers as the fourth partner, and relevant agencies as set out in Appendix A, (Sutton Local Safeguarding Children Partnership arrangements under Working Together 2018).

**10. THE SUTTON SAFEGUARDING ADULTS PEER REVIEW 2019**

Luke Addams, Interim Assistant Director Adult Social Services introduced the report. It was noted that the Peer Review was positive and areas of development as set out by review team had in the main already been identified by the Board. The Chair wished to thank Patrick Hopkinson for all his work on the Review.

**RESOLVED:**

- 1. To note the findings of the adult safeguarding peer review.
- 2. To endorse the recommendations / actions that will be taken forward through delivery plans.

**11. ANY URGENT BUSINESS**

There was no urgent business.

The meeting ended at 9.54 pm

Chair:  
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Date:  
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