

# CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

## MINUTES

### 18 DECEMBER 2012

**Chairman:** \* Councillor Mitzi Green

**Councillors:** \* Christine Bednell \* Varsha Parmar  
\* Margaret Davine \* Lynda Seymour  
\* John Nickolay (2)

**In attendance:** Bill Phillips Minute 106,109  
**(Councillors)**

\* Denotes Member present  
(2) Denote category of Reserve Members

#### 100. Welcome

The Chair welcomed representatives from Beyond Limits, to the meeting. The Chair also welcomed Councillor Keith Ferry, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration, and Councillor David Perry, Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services.

**RESOLVED:** That the representatives from Beyond Limits be allowed to speak on all agenda items during the meeting.

#### 101. Rights of Members to Speak

**RESOLVED:** That, in accordance with Executive Procedure Rule 40.1, the following Councillor, who was not a Member of the Panel be allowed to speak on the agenda items indicated:

<u>Councillor</u>	<u>Agenda Item</u>
Bill Phillips	7 – Apprenticeships for Children Looked After and Young People who are Leaving

Local Authority Care.

10 – Update Access to Leisure Facilities for Children Looked After and Young People who are Leaving Local Authority Care.

## 102. Attendance by Reserve Members

**RESOLVED:** To note the attendance at this meeting of the following duly appointed Reserve Member:-

Ordinary Member

Reserve Member

Councillor Janet Mote

Councillor John Nickolay

## 103. Declarations of Interest

**RESOLVED:** To note that there were no declarations of interests made by Members.

## 104. Minutes

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 October 2012, be taken as read and signed as a correct record.

## 105. Public Questions, Petitions and Deputations

**RESOLVED:** To note that no public questions, petitions or deputations were received at this meeting.

## RESOLVED ITEMS

## 106. Apprenticeships for Children Looked After and Young People who are Leaving Local Authority Care

An officer presented a report which informed the Panel on support provided on access to apprenticeships to Children Looked After (CLA) and Young People Leaving Care.

The officer explained that she was the Project Co-ordinator for a 10 week pilot work experience and job readiness programme called X16. The programme was designed for 16-25 year olds and all work placements offered for those participating on the programme had been provided by the Council.

The officer reported that:

- the work placements offered had been largely administrative posts;

- the objectives of the programme had been to enable those enrolled on the programme to build the knowledge, skills and confidence to be work ready, continue in education or training and gain employment;
- all of the young people who successfully completed the programme obtained a reference from a place of work, qualifications and an up to date CV;
- 22 young people had been referred to enrol on the programme. Allocation priorities onto the programme had been for young people in care;
- 10 young people had commenced the programme and out of these 4 were scheduled to complete the programme shortly;
- the report contained details of two case studies relating to the programme. These case studies had highlighted some successes and difficulties that had arisen during the programme;
- some of the challenges arising from the programme involved the fact that most young people did not have any GCSEs, had prior involvement with the police, had low self-confidence, low aspirations and struggled to deal with new situations. It was also identified that the availability of more trade roles to offer young people would have been welcomed. Investment was also required at an earlier stage to build resilience in young people enrolled on the programme and better participation was required from the private sector;
- the second round of the programme would commence in February 2013. Young people in care would still be provided with priority and additionally those young people already referred to the programme would be considered for re-recruitment.

During the discussion on this item, Members of the Panel raised a number of queries, which officers responded to as follows:

- feedback on the success of the programme had been obtained more from social workers than the young people actually enrolled on the programme. It was anticipated that the relevant young people would be consulted and those who had not completed the programme would be consulted for their views and re-referred onto the programme;
- it was recognised that the programme required adapting to ensure that it was tailor made for young people as much as possible. This included ensuring that the programme was more vocational, shorter in duration and involved a faster recruitment process;
- changes made to the programme's teaching plan whilst it was being delivered had unsettled participants. This would be avoided when delivering the course in the future;

- the reason why the course had originally been run for 10 weeks was because this was the longest period where the Jobseekers allowances could be claimed. The Job Centre had played a key role in supporting the programme;
- officers within the Council had built up excellent links with the private and voluntary sector. It was anticipated that these would be utilised when seeking work placements for future rounds of the programme;
- there was potential for further pre-commencement work to be conducted with the families / carers of young people who enrolled on the course. There were issues to address surrounding the commitment of young people;
- CLA had been made aware of the programme through their relevant social worker. This would be checked to ensure that details of the programme were being cascaded to CLA.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration addressed the Panel and commented that the Council had good links with Harrow and Stanmore Colleges, which had helped contribute to the success of the programme. Additionally there were training facilities at Whitefriars that could be utilised. It was important to emphasise that this programme aimed to assist young people with some of the most difficult needs and the Council were looking to assist them as much as possible. Some of these young people had no prior employment history. In addition to this the Council had adopted a Sustainable Procurement Policy which said that any of the Council's partners, with whom it entered into a contract with, must provide apprenticeship opportunities.

An added challenge was convincing other employers other than the Council to provide opportunities for young people. It was important to recognise that ultimately the beneficiaries of providing these opportunities would be the community and borough at large. It was anticipated that there would be provision in the Council's budget next year for the programme to continue.

A lot of young people came from troubled backgrounds and from families where the parents had never worked. This meant a change in ethos for that particular young person.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services further commented that it was important to highlight to private and other organisations that they had social responsibilities to try and encourage them to provide work placement opportunities for young people. Sometimes all young people required was faith shown in them and a chance.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration for his attendance and participation.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) a further report on the progress of the second round of the X16 programme be reported to a meeting of the Panel in July 2013;
- (2) the Panel support the provision made in the Council's budget for the X16 programme to continue for the next financial year 2013-14.
- (3) the Panel support all CLA and young people having access to all opportunities for employment and training;
- (4) The Panel support the collective endeavours of the CLA Life Chances Forum and task them with the responsibility for developing clear operational systems and processes for monitoring and reviewing how the access to leisure project and partnership with Community Services for CLA and young people leaving care is addressed by the Council.

**107. Annual Review of the Harrow Pledge for Children Looked After (CLA)**

An officer introduced a report which provided information on the effectiveness of the Harrow Pledge (The Pledge). The officer reported that it was expected that every Local Authority would have a pledge for children in their care outlining how they would ensure young people were well looked after.

The officer further reported the following:

- Local Authorities across London had signed up to the London Pledge. This aimed to ensure that children in care across London had equal access to the same range of services and support. It would then be for individual authorities to use the London Pledge as the basis for producing locally agreed pledges that would be reviewed by Local Children in Care Councils;
- in Harrow, the Pledge had been drafted in consultation with Children Looked After (CLA). This Pledge in Harrow was based on 7 key principles as detailed in the report;
- the Pledge was required to meet the needs of the CLA. An Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) was responsible for ensuring that the Harrow Pledge was monitored through the reviewing process;
- in accordance with Government guidance, the Local Children in Care Council would also participate in having annual reviews of the Harrow Pledge;
- there had been a number of ways in which the Council had sought views on the Harrow Pledge. Views had either been sought in writing, verbally or online. Feedback on the Pledge had also been obtained from 'Let's Talk' sessions and from the 'Celebration of Achievement' ceremony. The IRO had also provided their comments in relation to the progress and evaluation of the Harrow Pledge;

- it was recognised that more work was required with social workers and young people regarding the Harrow Pledge and how it affected them.

A representative from Beyond Limits addressed the Panel and made the following points:

- most of the elder CLA did not believe that the Pledge catered for their needs. It was believed that the Pledge seemed to be more directed towards the CLA under the age of 18;
- not all CLA felt happy about their living situation, especially those in the leaving care team;
- it would be helpful if the bursary given to all CLA when they go into independent living was increased from £1500 to £2000;
- there needed to be more focus on providing support for those CLA undertaking higher education, and not just at GCSE level.

The Chair thanked the representatives from Beyond Limits for their attendance and participation.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

#### **108. Update on Improvement - Ofsted**

An officer introduced the report and explained that this had been presented to the Panel as it had requested an updated copy to be circulated. However a further revised copy had been sent to Ofsted on 13 December 2012. This version would be circulated to Members of the Panel after the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

#### **109. Update Access to Leisure Facilities for Children Looked After and Young People who are Leaving Local Authority Care**

The Panel received a report which provided an update on the support provided to Children Looked After (CLA) and the young people leaving care to access leisure facilities in Harrow.

Officers introduced the report and made the following points:

- the CLA Life Chances Forum had established a sub-group in respect of facilitating CLA access to leisure;
- partnership arrangements had been established with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), providers of Harrow Leisure Centre and Harrow Library Service. The sub-group had established a registration session at Harrow Leisure Centre for all CLA and young people leaving care who lived in or near to the borough. This registration session had been

a success. All young people who registered would be monitored in terms of their usage of the facilities;

- GLL had agreed to offer a 30% discount to all Harrow CLA and young people leaving care living in or around Harrow, to use the leisure facilities;
- in addition to Harrow Leisure Centre, Cedars Youth Centre in partnership with Watford FC, would also make available facilities with CLA and young people leaving care, where there was a small gym;
- Harrow Library Service would also make available sessions for CLA and young people leaving care and had an established arrangement with foster carers to make use of the libraries;
- Library services could also provide the potential for homework clubs and meeting spaces for CLA and young people leaving care. In addition to this it was being investigated if charges could be waived for overdue borrowing and DVDs etc;
- social workers were required to evidence leisure engagement and participation with healthy living opportunities in care planning, pathways plans and assessments.

During the discussion on this item, Members of the Panel raised a number of queries, which officers responded to as follows:

- young people leaving care in higher education received bursary of £1200 per year to assist them in purchasing equipment and books for their course.

The Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services addressed the Panel and made the following points:

- the Council were already doing a number of things well in respect of leisure facilities for CLA and young people leaving care. However there was even more that could be achieved;
- it would be helpful if he, in his capacity as the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services, was involved in the CLA Life Chances Forum so that all of the strategic aims of the Council were met;
- it was important to note that there were a range of other activities which were available for CLA and young people leaving care at the Harrow Leisure Centre. These included sports like badminton. There were also other activities available at other venues including music and performing arts at the Harrow Arts Centre;
- GLL conducted a number of staff training workshops. If there were spaces at some of these sessions, enquiries could be made to

investigate if these could be filled by CLA or young people leaving care. These could provide excellent development opportunities;

- there were also a number of volunteering opportunities for CLA and young people leaving care. For example a number of sports clubs throughout the borough would readily welcome any volunteers to help them with their activities;
- there were a number of green gyms which had been installed at parks all across the borough. There would be programmes run on how to use this equipment and training others to use them. This was another scheme which could involve CLA and young people leaving care.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services for his attendance and participation and asked him and the Interim Divisional Director of Targeted Services to progress the suggestions made.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the Panel support the Virtual Headteacher pursuing further opportunities to use Leisure Facilities at schools;
- (3) a report be presented to the meeting of the Panel in July 2013, on the progress made in relation to the provision of leisure facilities and activities for CLA and young people leaving care;
- (4) that the collective endeavours of the CLA Life Chance Forum and sub group (for monitoring and reviewing how the access to leisure project and partnership with Community Services for CLA and young people leaving care) continues to be supported;
- (5) the Portfolio Holder for Community and Cultural Services and the Interim Divisional Director of Targeted Services progress the suggestions made on promoting access to leisure facilities for CLA and Young People Leaving Care.

**110. Information Report - Performance Update**

An officer introduced the report which set out performance information from the date of the last Panel meeting up until the end of September 2012. The officer reported that:

- more Children in Need cases were being allocated to social workers, resulting in increased volume of activity in social care and early intervention teams. This had resulted in performance issues around referrals and led to a drop in indicators for initial and core assessments;



- one of the key positive performances was in relation to the timeliness of CLA adoptions following an agency decision. The Council ranked along the best in the country for this performance indicator;
- the number of moves which involved 2 or more under the CLA placement stability, was slightly higher than the Council's target. However it was expected that the target would still be achieved despite this;
- the figures relating to the performance indicators for Children Protection Plans which had ceased having lasted for 2 or more years had been skewed by one sibling group;
- 12 out of 16 former care leavers were in suitable accommodation. 8 out of 16 former care leavers were in education, employment or training. These figures demonstrated that further work was required by the Council.

The Chair requested that a comprehensive report be presented back to the next Panel meeting on 22 April 2013 and that the report author be in attendance.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

#### **111. Progress Report from NHS Harrow**

The Chair reported that this report had not been circulated prior to the meeting as there had been technical issues with the report being sent to Council officers from NHS Harrow. In addition to this the officers from NHS Harrow who were due to present the report were both ill.

The Chair requested that the report be deferred until the next meeting of the Panel on 22 April 2013. The Chair emphasised the need for the issues within the report to be discussed as soon as possible given their importance.

The Chair also reported that copies of the report which was due to be discussed would be circulated to Members of the Panel, and that if they were any queries arising from this, these should be provided to Democratic Services who would forward these on to NHS Harrow.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be deferred until the next meeting of the Panel on 22 April 2013.

#### **112. Agenda Tracker**

The Panel received the latest version of their work programme. The Panel noted that at this meeting they had agreed the following:

- a report to be presented to the Panel at its meeting on 22 April 2012 on performance information;

- a report on the progress of the second round of the X16 programme to be presented to a meeting of the Panel in July 2013;
- a report to be presented to the meeting of the Panel in July 2013, on the progress made in relation to the provision of leisure facilities and activities for CLA and young people leaving care;
- a progress report on CLA to be presented by NHS Harrow.

The Chair also announced that a report on the annual stall for CLA and Beyond Limits would be presented to the meeting on 22 April 2013. The Chair also announced that at the meeting in April 2013, a report would be presented which would present findings in relation to a review of the social work teams within the Council.

**RESOLVED:** That the work programme be updated in line with the Panel's comments.

(Note: The meeting, having commenced at 7.30 pm, closed at 9.10 pm).

(Signed) COUNCILLOR MITZI GREEN  
Chairman