

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

20 March 2017

Executive Member Questions

The Committee is invited to question the Executive Member on his work and the work of the Committee. An update from the Executive Member is set out below. The procedure for Executive Member questions is set out overleaf.

Any questions that the Committee or members of the public may have should be submitted in advance to jonathan.moore@islington.gov.uk no later than Tuesday 14th March.

Update from the Executive Member

The Islington Fair Futures Commission has now officially launched. It was a fantastic event at which we heard from Chair Jermaine Jackman, Deputy Chair Kadeema Woodbyrne and great speakers including Commissioner Dez Holmes and Islington Young Mayor Diana Gomez. There is a real buzz about this commission and I'm really excited about the potential. To find out how to interact with the commission please visit www.fairfutures.org.uk There will be an extended listening and engagement process before the Commissioners start to analyse feedback and come up with proposals.

We now have 21 Boroughs signed up to our campaign on County Lines drug dealing and have a confirmed meeting with Home Office Minister Sarah Newton on 16th March. After our letter made the front page of the Standard the BBC got in touch - they are making a documentary about County Lines and are featuring our campaign as a key part of that. It should air in the Spring. I have also been invited to give evidence about this issue from a local government perspective to the all-party parliamentary group on Missing Children at which a Home Office Minister will be present. I have been listening to first hand testimonies from young people who have been caught up in this, and the dangers to young people who get involved are acute. Immediate action is needed at a national level in addition to our local safeguarding work.

An academy order has now been made in respect of Highbury Grove and the City are beginning due diligence prior to making a bid to the regional commissioner to run the school. The ethos of the school should be retained along with the focus on music. We explored all available options after the inspection and it was clear that any appeal would certainly fail. Whilst we remain opposed to forced academisation (Ofsted's own report says the LA knew what should be done to improve the school) encouraging the Governing body to appeal would merely have drawn out the process ahead for teachers, parents and pupils. Our hope is that the City of London MAT will agree to take on the school. The City participate in our local community of schools and would retain local authority and parent governors, work with the local authority and other schools.

Ofsted will be coming in to inspect Children's Services in Islington and the Independent Safeguarding Board very soon, so we have been doing lots of work to prepare for that. The recent decision of this Committee to scrutinise the role of the local authority as a corporate parent is very welcome and will show Ofsted how committed we are to this at a corporate level. Scrutiny Committee will be able to undertake the kind of long term in depth work that is not always possible in the short time available at Corporate Parenting Board. I would welcome scrutiny on the experience of looked after children placed 20 miles or more from home, care leavers and educational outcomes from looked after children, and young people who are remanded into care as priority areas.

Procedure for Executive Member Questions at Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

- (a) Elected members and members of the public may ask the Executive Member for Children and Families questions on any matter in relation to the executive portfolio or the work of the committee.
- (b) The intention of the session is to complement and enhance the work of the committee. The Executive Member may submit written information in advance of the meeting to advise of his recent work and other topical and timely matters of relevance. The session is not intended to replace or replicate the questions sessions held at each ordinary meeting of the Council.
- (c) Questions should be submitted in writing to the committee clerk no later than three clear working days in advance of the meeting. Such questions will be notified to the Executive Member which may facilitate a more detailed answer at the meeting. Details of how questions should be submitted will be detailed on the agenda for the meeting.
- (d) Questioners should provide their name to enable this to be recorded in the minutes of the meeting. The minutes of the meeting will include a summary of the question and the response.
- (e) The Chair may permit questions to be asked at the meeting without notice.
- (f) The time set aside for questions shall be no longer than 15 minutes.
- (g) No individual may ask more than two questions at each meeting.
- (h) Where there is more than one question on any particular subject or closely related subjects, the Executive Member may give a joint reply to the questions.
- (i) The committee clerk shall have power to edit or amend written questions to make them concise but without affecting the substance, following consultation with the questioner.
- (j) An answer may take the form of:
 - A direct oral answer;
 - Where the desired information is in a publication of the Council or other published work, a reference to that publication; or
 - Where the reply cannot conveniently be given orally, a written answer circulated later to the questioner within 5 working days provided the questioner has given contact details.
- (k) Priority shall normally be given to questions notified in advance.
- (l) The Chair may permit supplementary questions to be asked. Supplementary questions must arise directly out of the original question or the reply.
- (m) A question may be rejected by the committee clerk, or the Chair at the meeting, if it:
 - does not relate to the executive portfolio or the work of the committee;
 - is defamatory, frivolous or offensive;
 - is substantially the same as a question asked to the Executive Member at any meeting within the last six months;
 - requests the disclosure of information which is confidential or exempt; or
 - names, or clearly identifies, a member of staff or any other individual.