

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee held on Friday, 27 March 2009 in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone.

PRESENT: Mr C J Capon (Chairman), Mrs C Angell (Vice-Chairman), Mr D L Brazier, Mr R B Burgess, Mr A D Crowther, Mr R W Gough, Mrs E Green, Mr I T N Jones, DL, Mr W V Newman, DL, Mr M J Northey, Mr J D Simmonds, Mr R Tolputt, Mr C T Wells and Mr M J Vye

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES: Mr S Parr (Substitute for Dr D Wadman)

TEACHER ADVISERS: Mr T Desmoyers-Davies, Mrs J Huckstep, Miss S Kemsley and Mr J Walder

ALSO PRESENT: Mrs A D Allen, Mr M C Dance, Mrs S V Hohler, Mr L B Ridings and Dr T R Robinson

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr K Abbott (Interim Joint Managing Director, CFE), Mrs J Ackroyd (Trust Development Manager), Dr I Craig (Interim Joint Managing Director, CFE), Ms P Davies (Kent Safeguarding Children Board Manager), Ms S Dunn (Head of 14-24 Innovation Unit), Mr A Foster (Lead Curriculum Adviser, Subject Adviser For PSHE, Citizenship And Re), Mrs S Morris (Head of Strategic Planning & Review), Miss S Robinson (Cabinet Staff Officer For The Children, Families And Education Directorate), Ms A Slaven (Director Youth Services and KDAAT), Mrs K Weiss (Head of Policy & Performance), Mrs M White (Head of Extended Services) and Mrs C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

162. Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2009

(Item A3)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2009 were correctly recorded subject to the words "mainstream schools" in Minute 149 (2) bullet point 2 been altered to read "transport" and that they be signed by the Chairman.

163. LCSP Sub Committee - update from meeting on 12 March 2009

(Item A4)

(1) Mrs A Allen, Chairman of the LCSP Sub-Committee, presented the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2009.

(2) In response to a question Mrs Allen confirmed that the meetings dates of the Sub-Committee would be set to coincide with the Policy Overview Committees meetings to allow the Minutes of the LCSP Sub-Committee to be despatched in time with the papers of the Policy Overview Committee and copies of the Minutes of 12

March and future meetings would be despatched to all Members of the County Council.

(3) RESOLVED that as the Minutes had been despatched late, officers agreed to receive any comments outside the meeting.

164. Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Champions Board - 12 February and 11 March 2009

(Item A5)

(1) Mrs Allen, Chairman of the Children's Champions Board presented the Minutes of the meetings held on 12 February and 11 March 2009.

(2) In response to a question from Mrs Angell, the Democratic Services Officer agreed to forward the draft Minutes of the Children's Champions Board via email to all Kent County Councillors.

(3) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 February and 11 March 2009 be noted.

165. The appointment of the new Managing Director for Children, Families and Education.

(Item A6)

(1) Mr Abbott advised the Committee that Mrs Rosalind Turner had been appointed Managing Director and would be taking up her post on 11 May 2009.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

166. Children, Families and Education Budget Monitoring 2008/09

(Item B1)

(1) The Committee received the monitoring report for the third quarter on the forecast outturn against the budget for the Children, Families and Education Directorate for 2008/09. Mr Abbott highlighted the key areas within the report.

(2) Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments which included the following:-

(3) In response to a question by Mr Vye, Mr Abbott agreed to review the impact of the vacancies across the Directorate and include the information known on vacancies to date in the report.

(4) In response to a question by Mr Simmonds on the overspend on SEN Transport to schools, Mr Abbott advised that the overspend was due to an increase in SEN pupils as well as the increase in prices and the nature of single occupancy taxi arrangements in place for some pupils. A detailed piece of analysis work was being undertaken with Mr Kevin Harlock, Commercial Services Director, on Volume Contracts and the outcome of Member transport appeals. The conclusions of this work would be reported to a future meeting of this Committee. Mr Dance added that a small group would be set up to look at the disparities regarding SEN transport in the interim.

(5) In response to a request, Mr Dance advised that parents would be consulted at a later stage and there would be opportunity for cross party discussion.

(6) In response to concerns by Mr Newman on the Capital (£2.590m) overspend, Mr Abbott advised that this was partly due to a timing issue which would be addressed in the 2009/10 Budget. The Monitoring returns from schools had been received by the local authority. The returns from schools indicated a large drawn down of reserves, with a prediction of £8m.

(7) In response to a question regarding the overspend on the service since the case of "Baby P", Mr Abbott explained that the overspend forecast had been included in the Budget and reflected a 40% increase in the number of referrals not a 40% increase in the number of children taken into care as has been suggested.

(8) In response to a question on schools, Mr Abbott advised that the first projections for 2009/10 would be within the 3 year plans, which schools were now producing and were due to be received in May. The new arrangements enabled schools to plan with more certainty about the affects/impact of decisions on future years.

(9) In response to a question by Mr Newman on whether the LEA had a deficit policy for schools, Mr Abbott explained that the general policy was not to allow deficits but in some circumstances schools did move into deficit and for those there were agreed individual school plans. These could mean that a school required a "cashflow" loan - but the school would be responsible for the costs of that including interest and this would be built into the recovery plan.

(10) RESOLVED that the projected outturn figures for the Directorate as at the third quarter and the Members' comments be noted.

167. Interim Joint Managing Directors update

(Item B2)

(1) Dr Craig advised the Committee of the new management arrangements as he was due to retire. As from 1 April to 11 May, Mr Keith Abbott would be taking up the whole Directorship, dealing with the day-to-day issues within the CFE Directorate. The Chief Executive would have legal responsibility for safe-guarding issues within the Directorate. The post of Director, Strategic Policy and Performance, formally held by Mrs M Hodges who recently retired (and currently covered by Mr Abbott) would remain open to afford Mrs Rosalind Turner, Managing Director, flexibility with the management team structure, especially in light of the Lord Lamin Report. Dr Craig advised that the Lamin Report, which was presently with the Secretary of State, had 58 recommendations which would be central to the way Children Families and Education organise its structure. The role that Dr Craig held would be taken on by Mr G Ward. Mr B Anderson, Mr K Abbott, Mrs J Wainwright and Mr R Murrells would keep their original roles.

(2) Members requested copies of the Lord Lamin Report and the transcript of Lord Lamin's recent speech in the House of Commons.

(3) Mrs Angell suggested that the Lamin Report should not remain a CFE POC issue but should be kept at the forefront of all County Councillors minds. In

response, Mrs Allen advised that the Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager would be including this in the Member Induction.

(4) In response to concerns raised regarding social workers' morale and social worker post vacancies, Mr Ridings advised that the Chief Executive had given the go ahead to appoint more social workers with the support of an extra £1.5 m in the budget for 2009, in response to the Lamin Report due to be published in April 2009.

(5) RESOLVED that the report and Members' comments and requests be noted.

168. PSHE Members Advisory Group

(Item B3)

(1) Members received a report on the activity, progress and future development of the cross-partying formal Members Advisory Group (MAG) chaired by Mrs S V Hohler.

(2) Mrs Hohler introduced the report and highlighted the progress of the MAG. The Committee were advised that PSHE would be given statutory status and form part of the curriculum in Key Stage 1-4. This was likely to take effect in 2011. The Review would be led by Sir Alistair McDonald on how best to make PSHE statutory.

(3) In light of these developments Mrs Hohler sought Members' agreement to the MAG continuing its role in supporting future developments in PSHE and the implementation of the Kent PSHE Strategy.

(4) Mrs Hohler agreed with Mr Tolputt's suggestion that more use should be made of Youth Workers in schools.

(5) In noting the three points from Members on PSHE linking with SACRE, including "love" when teaching sex education and having good self image and confidence in the future, Mr Foster advised that the LEA was working in all schools taking account of different faiths and values. The McDonald report would provide important health and sex education directive. He felt that PSHE needed to be looked at in context of the development of education in Kent, DSFF and OFSTED had reported that this was of a high quality. Work was also being undertaken with school governors on their responsibilities regarding PSHE.

(6) Ms Kemsley raised two points:-

- (i) that as Headteacher, she was not allowed to know about some of the data for her school (e.g. teenage pregnancy rates) but was charged with improving it; and
- (ii) that her preferred option for PSHE delivery was to have more access to experts.

(7) Mrs Hohler explained that the MAG had debated on the issue of teachers or experts, as some teachers found the subject awkward although they could be contacted in school at any time by pupils. The MAG's preferred option was to have one person per school.

(8) Mr Newman's comments on the use of the word "challenge" being altered to "co-operation" was noted.

(9) Mr Simmonds' point regarding parents' responsibility being included in the process was noted.

(10) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) in light of the progress made and future developments that were expected, the Members Advisory Group continue to support PSHE through monitoring the progress of the Kent PSHE Strategy Action Plan by Lead Officers reporting three times a year;
- (b) the officers be commended for their on-going support; and
- (c) the report and Members' comments and suggestions be noted.

169. Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA)

(Item B4)

(1) The Committee was provided with a report on the new inspection process CAA, as it affected Children's Services. The CAA replaced the Comprehensive Performance Assessment from April 2009.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

170. Kent Safeguarding Children's Board (KSCB) Annual Report 2007-08 & Business Plan 2008-11

(Item B5)

(Mrs P Davies, Manager for Kent Safeguarding Children's Board (KSCB) was present for this item)

(1) The Committee received the second annual report of the KSCB, a statutory requirement, and the Business Plan of the KSCB for 2008/11 following its establishment in April 2006.

(2) Mrs Davies was present to answer Members' questions and comments which included the following:-

- (a) In response to a question from Mrs Angell regarding the underspend detailed on page 158 of the report, Mrs Davies explained that since 2006 there had been an underspend from the Kent Child Protection Service due to job vacancies. This was a shared problem with a number of agencies. The three year Business Plan had been signed off and this was where the budget would be spent.
- (b) In response to a question from Mr Gough on Kent's figures being higher than neighbouring authorities for Children in Need on page 145 of the report and children on Child Protection Plan on page 151 of the report, Mrs Davies explained that the records were produced by the Children Social Services using three different systems since 2001; KAFIS, SWIFT and ICS

systems. In 2001-02 there was a 100% system recorded deemed referral or inappropriate referral, now there were differentials and the figures are more accurate. Mrs Davies referred to page 145 that indicated a reduction.

- (c) In response to concerns raised by Mr Gough on the high figure indicated on page 32 that referred to the chart on page 33, Mrs Davies explained that there had been a change in practice, when a child was placed on the Child Protection Register they were at that time subject to Child Protection Plan. Those children could not be removed from the register or the plan. The Children Social Services had investigated this. All children were subject to a Child Protection Plan, some children were coming off too early by children remaining on the register longer made the figures increase. Case files were monitored pre-Jar inspection. This figure was now being monitored. There was now confidence that those children who were on the register need to have a Child Protection Plan.
- (d) In response to concerns made by Mr Vye that due to the lack of information provided to Members they were unable to scrutinise the information on page 145 of the report that included the chart from 2001-02 in line with reference on page 37 of the Lamin Report on whether all referrals from other professionals led to an assessment, Mrs Davies advised that in light of the Lamin Report the Business Plan would need to be reviewed. In future all referrals from agencies would lead to an assessment, this would be included in the revised procedure.
- (e) In response to Mr Vye's three further concerns on the issue of the size of the report and the trust getting into difficulties in overseeing the safeguarding forums, Mrs Davies explained that this had been noted by the Children's Trust and was being addressed. With regard to the Board's Terms of Reference to review what agencies were doing, Mrs Davies advised that one of the Board's statutory responsibilities was to re-challenge, this was aided by the 14 sub-groups of the Board. Assistance had also been sought on the Section 11 Audit with Christchurch University. In response to concerns regarding the thresholds, Mrs Davies confirmed that the Performance Monitoring Group would be looking at thresholds from a multi-agency prospective.
- (f) In response to a question by Mr Newman on why the bar charts within the report indicated that physical and sexual injury had reduced but emotional abuse had risen, Mrs Davies explained that in 2006 the "Working Together to Safeguard Children" gave a definition on where a child was placed, that heading had now changed. Children who witness physical abuse before 2006 had been listed under "Physical Abuse" but now they were listed under "Emotional Abuse".
- (g) In response to Mr Simmond's concerns on complexity of the KSCB structure and the risk of issues slipping through the net and the huge responsibility the Board held and whether in light of the Lamin Report, this should be streamlined, Mrs Davies advised that; the Board's Constitution, the structural and sub-structure was due to be reviewed in 2009. She added that the local meetings with practitioners were the core business of

the Board was to promote safeguards for children. There was a lot of training at this level too. The Review should look to improve and build on what had already been achieved. Mrs Davies assured Members' that their comments and suggestions would be noted and fed into the review.

- (h) Mr Abbott advised Mr Wells that his comments on the public's perception of the same names reappearing on various boards were noted and that a fully independent Chairman would be appointed.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the report and the Business Plan 2008-2011 be noted; and
- (b) the comments and suggestions made by Members be considered in the Review of the KSCB.

171. Kent Children's Trust "Thinking Family" Implementation Plan for Kent Supporting Parents

(Item B6)

(Mrs M White, Head of Extended Services was present for this item)

(1) The Committee received an update on the "Thinking Family" Implementation for Kent's Supporting Parents and the draft priorities and how it would be taken forward.

(2) In response to a question from Mrs Angell, Mrs White explained that parents could be involved through the areas' Parent Fora. The Parent Fora had; specific groups for parents with learning disabilities and parent conferencing where parents were involved in shaping their packages for accessing universal agencies.

(3) In response to comments made by Mr Northey and Mr Vye on strengthening the importance of the role of fathers, Mrs White advised that all of the Local Children's Partnerships were addressing "Supporting Parents" within their plans but were at different stages in producing their plans.

(4) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the draft priorities for the Implementation Plan and Members' comments be noted; and
- (b) the ongoing consultation, implementation and monitoring arrangements and the national developments as set out in Section 2 of the report be noted.

172. The Implementation and Planning of 16-19 Transition for April 2010

(Item B7)

(Mrs S Dunn, Head of 14-24 Innovation Unit was present for this item)

(1) The Committee considered a report on KCC's new role in respect of commissioning and funding for 16-19 provision across Kent and Medway for April 2010 when those responsibilities were transferred from the Learning and Skills

Council (LSC) following its abolition. Three new government agencies would be established to replace the LSC; Young People's Learning Agency, National Apprenticeship Service and Skills Funding Agency.

(2) Mr Dance, along with Mr Simmonds, introduced the report explaining that this was a complex piece of work for which further, more detailed guidance was awaited from the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF), this was anticipated to be published at Easter 2009.

(3) In response to concerns raised by Mrs Angell regarding GOSE, Mr Abbott advised that proposals had been submitted to GOSE on the sub-regional groupings. The feedback from GOSE on the proposals had been strong. The proposals were now with Ministers for feedback.

(4) In response to concerns raised by Mr Vye and Mr Gough, Mr Abbott explained that detailed guidance on the commissioning and allocations process was still awaited. There was little guidance on the new agency's role. This guidance had been delayed from February 2009.

(5) In response to concerns raised by Mr Burgess, Mrs Dunn advised that the local authority did not have the statistics regarding the jobs available to the supply of courses, work would need to be undertaken on this.

(6) RESOLVED that the report and Members' comments be noted.

173. An Alcohol Strategy for Kent

(Item B8)

(Mrs A Slaven, Director of Youth Services and KDAAT was present for this item)

(1) Members received a report outlining how the Alcohol Strategy for Kent sets out the way forward for agencies across Kent to work in partnership to prevent harm caused by alcohol misuse by providing a structure for the development of treatment programmes and preventative strategy and a community approach to issues, including Policing, Licensing and Trading Standards.

(2) Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments which included the following:-

- (a) In response to concerns raised by Mrs Angell, comparing funding for drug offences and what she considered little funding given to alcohol prevention and treatment, Mrs Slaven agreed advising that this was a national dilemma. The National Treatment Agencies' focus was to deal with drug issues. The Agency did not fund alcohol issues. Alcohol issues were funded by; the PCTs, received charitable support and KCC contributed £121k. A lot of the costs for alcohol were hidden as many people suffering from alcohol issues arrived at hospital and were treated for other issues related to alcohol. For the future we would be ensuring we get all of this information to make the statistical data robust.
- (b) In response to two questions by Mr Vye, Mrs Slaven advised that drugs and alcohol misuse relating to child abuse cases could be picked up but was not currently recorded. There were national statistics that supported

the fact that a key characteristic with domestic violence was drug and alcohol misuse. Mrs Slaven felt it was key that the National Harm Reduction Strategy should be considered by this Committee at a future meeting.

- (c) In response to concerns from Mr Brazier, Mrs Slaven explained that there was no method to ensure GPs at first point of contact identified alcohol misuse and developed treatment options. However, general practitioner specialists were being developed and this offered opportunities to develop skills, knowledge and understanding in the future. Treatment for alcohol issues was different pharmaceutically.
- (d) In response to concerns raised by Mr Jones regarding the perception of young people's attitude towards drink being a problem in the United Kingdom, Mrs Slaven advised that there were a range of views regarding this issue. It was important that the Alcohol Strategy had a measured picture following the safe, sensible and social strategy. A recent survey in Kent concluded that young people in Kent were drinking less than the national average.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) that the report and comments made by Members be noted; and
- (b) the progress made on the Alcohol Strategy to broaden consultation with partners and communities, be noted.

174. Integrated Youth Support Strategy

(Item B9)

(Mrs A Slaven, Director of Youth Service and KDAAT was present for this item)

(1) The Committee considered a report outlining the content and progress of the IYSS accompanied by the Implementation Plan, both were subject to formal consultation through the Kent Children's Trust Partnership.

(2) In response to questions from Mrs Angell and one question from Mrs Green regarding training and funding for Youth Workers, Mrs Slaven agreed to send a written explanation to Members outside this meeting.

175. Select Committees - Update

(Item C1)

(1) Members received a report seeking suggestions for potential Select Committee topics that fall within the remit of this Committee.

(2) Members of the Committee agreed to consider any potential topics and notify the Democratic Services Officer.

(3) RESOLVED that the report be noted.