

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, 28 September 2007 in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone.

PRESENT: Mr C J Capon (Chairman), Mrs C Angell (Vice-Chairman), Mr A R Bassam (Substitute for Mr M J Northey), Mr D L Brazier, Mr A D Crowther, Mr J Curwood, Mr C Hibberd, Mr G A Horne MBE, Mr I T N Jones, DL, Mr C J Law, Mr W V Newman, DL, Mrs E D Rowbotham (Substitute for Mr C Hart), Mr R Tolputt and Mr M J Vye

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

PARENT GOVERNORS: Mr P Hawthorne

TEACHER ADVISERS: Mr T Desmoyers-Davis, Ms R Olivier, and Mr J Walder

APOLOGIES: Mr R Burgess

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance and Mr C T Wells

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Service Manager (Policy Overview)) and Mrs M Hodges (Director Strategy Policy & Performance)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

62. Membership

The Committee noted that Mr J Walder had replaced Mr P Vokes as a Teacher Advisor to this Committee.

63. Declaration of Interests by Members in items on the Agenda for this meeting

(Item A3)

64. Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 July 2007

(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meetings held on 5 July and 24 July 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

65. "Towards 2010"

(Item B1)

(1) The Committee considered a report which set out the process for finalising the first Towards 2010 Annual Report prior to approval by County Council on 18 October 2007. Included with the report were the targets where the Children, Families and Education Directorate is either the lead or a major contributor.

(2) Members were invited to make comments and ask questions on the targets which included the following:-

a) Target 10 – Improve the quality of early years education by strengthening the links between pre-schools/nurseries and primary schools, thereby improving children's ability to learn when they enter primary school

- Although the improvement at set out at the end of second paragraph “inadequate “provision in education has reduced to 6%” it was suggested that this could be presented in a more positive way.
- It was noted that the 12,000 new childcare places across Kent were not just in the maintained nurseries.
- Members requested Information on the “Leuven Project”
- It was suggested that timings should be given for work in progress
- A Member mentioned that in the current years budget more funding was requested for Early Years (EY) practitioners and support which was not put into the budget, he asked if this was likely to be included in next years budget. One of the Cabinet Members confirmed that this was in the bidding round. There was some discussion about the form that this support should take.
- It was suggested that the issues of quality of provision could be reported to the Members Monitoring Group and a report, which did not identify specific setting be submitted to this Committee
- When projects such as the Leuven Project” are proposed for specific areas the Members requested that the local Member should be informed about the project and updated on progress.
- Where percentages are given in the measurable indicator, it was requested that the actual figures also be given.
- The impact of the Children’s workforce strategy should be acknowledged.
- It would be helpful to list the agencies involved in delivering targets

b) Target 11 – Help and inspire all our children to do well, with a particular focus on ensuring that the results our seven and 11 year-olds achieve at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 improve faster than the national rate

- A Member pointed out that the mention of underperformance by LAC and boys could stigmatise them when the document goes into the public domain, it was suggested that other reasons for lack of progress with the target should be mentioned as well. A Cabinet Member responded that in order to target resources we needed to be specific about the audience.
- It was clarified that “seasonal” meant “termly”
- Some Members stated that if there were going to be continued improvements at KS2 there was a need for Local Education Officers to have extra support. Another Member felt that if any additional resources were available they should be directed at schools rather than support staff.

- A Member mentioned that if there was a target of e.g. 81% achievement this means that 19% are not achieving. It was noted that at the November meeting of POC there would be a report on Attainment which would include details of what was being done to assist the 19% to achieve the required level, including details about specific programmes.

c) Target 12 – Work with headteachers to encourage a zero tolerance approach towards disruptive behaviour, bullying and vandalism in our schools

- It was confirmed that the Authority encouraged schools not to suspend pupils. Members welcomed the reduction in exclusions as a measurable indicator. It was noted that a key issue for Head teachers was the responsiveness of parents and carers.
- It was noted that there would be more money from the DfES for the SEAL project to expand into secondary schools.
- Members suggested that the anti-bullying strategy should include e-bullying even if that meant a delay in issuing the strategy.
- It was agreed that there would be a fuller discussion of the issues around the anti-bullying strategy at a future meeting of the Committee.
- Schools should be encouraged to include accurate figures relating to race equality issues so that the real scale of the problem can be assessed
- A Member raised the issue of children who were highly disruptive, which the schools did not have the resources to specially assist, and who did not qualify for a place at a special school, which it was suggested should be considered further.
- Members stated that the use of restorative justice in schools should be supported and the need for staff to be trained in this recognised. It was requested that information on this should be supplied to Members.
- It was requested that the work “parent” be included in the next steps item re engagement.

d) Target 13 – Continue to offer and develop further multi-agency support to parents by helping them with the problems they and their children face in everyday life

- Mr Wells undertook to inform Mrs Angell of progress with the measurable indicator for this target.
- There was a view expressed that this measurable indicator should not include 2006/07.

e) Target 14 – Listen to young people’s views and opinions and develop their ideas to improve education and life in Kent

- Members were pleased to see work of substance misuse team and trading standards highlighted.
- Member discussed the role of the Kent Youth County Council (KYCC) and although they acknowledged that KYCC was excellent it could be argued that they were not necessarily representative of the student body and that other groups, such as school councils and the Youth Advisory Group, should also be engaged with.

- A Member mentioned that in relation to hard to reach groups there was the issue of hearing from for example an ethnic mix, it was noted that the pupils survey was being analysed under different groups, and also there was feedback from schools and clusters at the local level. Local Children's Trust's were being encouraged to develop their own participation arrangements to reflect their local communities.

f) Target 15 – Raise the expectations and aspirations of our young people by giving all 13-19 year-olds the very best careers guidance and by providing master classes presented by businessmen, entrepreneurs and professionals

- It was noted that a survey of 9 secondary schools had shown that 92% of young people went to their parents for careers guidance, many young people were not aware of careers guidance being available at school. Advice given by parent could be 20 – 30 years out of date in relation to the job market. Grandparents also had a role to play in influencing career choice.
- It was acknowledged that this target was a complicated one especially as it was one element of a group of activity covering the new 14-24 agenda and should not be read in isolation as other targets cover Education and Business Partnerships and careers. It was important to have careers advice in schools and to support teachers in this.
- A Member stated that there was no mention of the importance of foreign languages in careers advice, this was especially important in areas such as Dover.
- A Member expressed that view that it was better if career guidance was given before the age of 14.
- A Teacher Advisor Representative pointed out that although schools could in theory employ their own careers staff there would be funding implications for them. The connexions advisors funding was top sliced.

g) Target 16 – Expand our pioneering vocational 14–16 programme to more than 4,000 students, offering real choice in a diverse and stimulating curriculum tailored to the needs of students and relevant to the real world

- It was agreed that Members would be given information on the future of the Learning Skills Councils (LSCs) as soon as it was available.
- In relation to the role of universities and foundation degrees, Members were informed that discussions were being held with the University of Kent regarding an engineering course, it was hoped that if this was successful other facilities at the university might consider similar projects to encourage them to engage with Kent schools

h) Target 17 – Double the number of participants on Skills Force-type programmes

- It was clarified that the reason that the measurable indicator mentioned “Skill Force **type**” was that the authority has had to go through a procurement process.

i) Target 18 – Introduce a Kent Apprenticeship scheme, offering at least 1,000 apprenticeship opportunities across the private and public sectors

- It was clarified that the 20 young people who had left the project had done so because they had completed it – only 8 had left early and these did so for personal reasons or had decided that the project was not for them.
- j) Target 19 – Introduce the Kent Community Programme, building teams of apprentices to participate in community projects
- Members were informed that the areas for the Kent Community Programme had been chosen by targeting the areas with the highest numbers of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETs)
- k) Target 20 – Build strong business-education partnerships that benefit both employers and schools
- It was confirmed that the work on this target was now within the remit of the 14 – 24 innovation unit.
 - It was confirmed that Kent Works was an Education and business partnership body who had won the contract from the LSC for EBPs
- l) Target 22 – Establish a biennial Kent Youth Games and support Kent sports men and women to compete in the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics
- Members were informed that the Kent Youth Games would be team games, with a few individual events, for participants from Kent Schools. The games included would be those that were played in the majority of Kent schools
 - A Member suggested that it would be good to have something similar involving teams from other countries
- 11-16 m) Target 30 – Work towards introducing a Kent youth travel card entitling all year olds to free public transport in the county, subject to the outcome of two district pilots
- It was confirmed that consideration would be given to the freedom bus pass being extended to other areas following the pilot scheme. Extending the scheme to 16 – 18 year olds was unlikely at this time as the priority would be to extend the current scheme across Kent and the 16 – 18 in education could, if they qualified for it, receive Education Maintenance Allowance
 - It was suggested that it would be helpful to have measurable indicators based on the evaluation set out in the last paragraph of the paper on this target.
- n) Target 31 - Pilot staggered school hours to relieve rush-hour congestion
- was noted

o) Target 47 – Create and launch initiatives that facilitate more competitive sport in schools, support after-school sports clubs and sponsor more inter-school competitions and holiday sports programmes

- It was stated that the freedom bus pass would make it easier for young people to stay after school and participate in more sport.
- It was clarified that the number of new out of school hours programme was 60 **schools**.

p) Target 50 – Introduce a hard-hitting public health campaign targeted at young people to increase their awareness and so reduce the damaging effects of smoking, alcohol, drugs and early or unprotected sex

- Members suggested that there should be some measurable targets in this area other than campaigns. PI's for this were currently being investigated. It was noted that work was being done with Yale University to look at why some young people were more likely to engage in risky behaviour. Children, Families and Education staff were working with Public Health colleagues on this.
- A Member stated that if the recommendations of the PSHE Select Committee and the Dutch model were adopted this would go a long way to achieving this target.
- Members highlighted that resistance of some Governors to having health clinics in school was a barrier to progress with this target. It was noted that colleagues in Primary Care Trusts were going to be writing to school governors about this.

r) Target 51 – Encourage healthy eating by providing nutritious lunches through the "Healthy Schools" programme and launch a range of community-based healthy eating pilots

- A Member suggested that a good measurable indicator would be the increase in the % of take up of school meals.

s) Target 55 – Ensure better planning to ease the transition between childhood and adulthood for young people with disabilities and to promote their independence

- Members stated that they would like to see parents included in this indicator as well.

(3) RESOLVED that comments and responses to questions from Members on the Towards 2010 targets that came within the remit of this Committee be noted.

66. Joint Area Review

(Item B2)

(1) Mr Carter presented a report which informed Members that Kent was soon to be subject to a Joint Area Review (JAR) of Children's Services, with inspection fieldwork taking place in early 2008. The JAR aimed to assess how effectively KCC and partners worked together to improve outcomes for Children and Young People, with a particular focus on vulnerable groups. The outcome of the JAR was critical to

Kent's Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) outcome, with a score of 3 or better required to maintain the excellent rating. The report provided information about this process, preparations being made and links to other inspections taking place at the same time.

(2) In response to a question from a Member Mr Carter stated that according to the guidance from Ofsted on the JAR process, Opposition Members were not involved in the process. Opposition Members would of course have an involvement in the CPA process which was a much wider exercise.

(3) That the report be noted and that further updates be submitted to future meetings of the Committee

67. Response to the Questionnaire on Overview Committees

(Item B3)

(1) The Committee received a paper from the Leader which gave his response to the questionnaire of all Policy Overview Committee Members.

(2) RESOLVED That the report be noted