

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 Thursday, 15 November 2007 in the Council Chamber, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone.

PRESENT: Mr C J Capon (Chairman), Mrs C Angell (Vice-Chairman), Mr D L Brazier, Mr R B Burgess, Ms A Harrison (Substitute for Mr W V Newman, DL), Mr C Hart, Mr C Hibberd, Mr G A Horne MBE, Mr I T N Jones, DL, Mr C J Law, Mr M J Northey and Mr R Tolputt

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

TEACHER ADVISERS: Mrs J Huckstep

APOLOGIES: Mr R Bristow, Mr T Desmoyers-Davis, Mr J Walder and Mr M J Vye

ALSO PRESENT: Mr M C Dance and Mr C Wells

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Badman, Managing Director, Children, Families & Education, Mrs M Hodges, Director Strategic Policy and Performance and Ms D Fitch, Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Policy Overview)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

68. Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2007

(Item A2)

(1) A Member raised the issue of outstanding information that had been promised to Members at the last meeting. It was confirmed that this information would be supplied to Members as a matter of urgency.

(2) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

69. Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Champions Board on 26 September 2007

(Item A3)

(1) Mrs Allen in presenting these Minutes drew Members attention to their role as Corporate Parents and recommended Members use the Minutes of the Children's Champions Board to keep themselves informed. She reported that she had attended an excellent conference on Safeguarding Children. Mrs Allen stated that arrangements were being made for Members to meet with young people.

(2) Mr Badman reported that following a visit by Beverley Hughes to the County Council, it was anticipated that the new White Paper would announce that Looked

After Children should be placed in their own local authority area as a first choice and that any placement outside of the local authority area would need to be justified on medical or extreme need grounds. This was good news for this authority and he commended the work of his colleagues, Paul Brightwell and Kate Weiss in helping to secure this.

(3) RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

70. Dates of Future Meetings - 2008

(Item A4)

RESOLVED that the following dates for meetings in 2008 be noted:-

30 January 2008
25 March 2008
3 June 2008
19 September 2008
13 November 2008

71. CFE Budget Monitoring 2007/08

(Item B1)

(1) Mr Abbott and Mr Ward answered questions from Members on the CFE Budget Monitoring report. Officers explained that the information submitted in this quarterly monitoring report was for the first quarter of the financial year. The challenge with the financial monitoring reports going to the Policy Overview Committees was to align the quarterly monitoring reports with the meetings of the Policy Overview Committees.

(2) The issues covered by Members included the following:-

- Page B1:2 – projected overspend of £433k in relation to legal costs within Children's Services - it was explained that it reflected care proceedings where cases were often more complex and lengthy.
- Page B1:2 – in relation to the £3m projected overspend in relation to support for unaccompanied asylum seeking children – it was explained that this was a continuing issue over the last couple of years and to date the figure was running at £3.6m shortfall. This was a problem that was being taken up with the relevant Government department.
- The projected overspend in relation to SEN Home to School Transport on Page B1:2 was corrected to read £935k.
- In relation to a question on specific projects, which were dependent on Capital Receipts or required funding, officers confirmed that the monitoring report did not show individual schemes but just the variances in the Capital Programme plus or minus.

- In response to a question on what steps were being taken to ease public concerns in relation to the reduction in SEN transport, the Cabinet Member for Operations, Resources and Skills stated that due to an overspend on this budget, Commercial Services had been asked to re-evaluate SEN transport and any anomalies arising from this were being dealt with.
- Officers undertook to circulate the current timetable for the Building Schools for the Future funding.
- In relation to the underspend on Children's Centres it was explained that this was due to assumptions made on the opening of Children's Centres which in some cases had been delayed and therefore the revenue funding was not needed in the current year. An assurance was given that this funding had to be spent in accordance with the requirements of the grant.
- In relation to the underspend on Children's Centres, it was confirmed that this money would be accruing interest as part of the County Council's budget and the decision on what the money would be used for would be taken later in the year following discussions at the Schools Forum.
- Page B1:13 regarding the Castle Hill PS (Fresh Start Scheme) slippage, Members were assured that all was being done to ensure that this scheme was progressed as quickly as possible but that it was essential that the scheme was one that the school was comfortable with. Mr Ward undertook to let Members have a detailed update on the current situation with the scheme.
- Page B1:19 - in relation to the Bridge Development at Dartford, Mr Ward explained that the two figures given were not comparable; £3.699m was the schools element of development and was part of the total £8.5m.
- Mr Abbott undertook to let Mr Hart have the figures for the number of alternative curriculum places for July to September 2007.
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(2) RESOLVED that Members of the Policy Overview Committee were asked to note the projected outturn figures for the directorate as at the first quarter.

72. Medium Term Financial Plan - 2008-11 for the C, F & E Directorate (Item B2)

(1) Mr Abbott presented a report on the Autumn Budget Statement report to Cabinet on 17 September 2007. He updated Members on the information received from the Department for Children Schools and Families on 12 November 2007 about the Dedicated Schools Grant and Minimum Funding Guarantee for the next three years.

(2) Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments on the Medium Term Plan and to consider suggested service pressures for the Directorate. As part of this, the following were some of the issues raised:-

- Mr Abbott undertook to let Mr Law have details behind the figure £3.617m for pay as mentioned on page B2:5.
- It was pointed out that this was all part of a new developing process to have the quarterly monitoring budget reports to Policy Overview Committees as well as the Medium Term Financial Plan and as such, it would take time to settle this down and to get the most benefit from it for Members.
- Members stated that they did not want to be put in the position again of having to try and identify priorities but not having sufficient information to do so.

(3) Members did not feel that they had adequate information at this stage to actually make suggestions around the areas and type of savings and efficiencies that they considered could realistically be achieved.

(4) It was suggested that when the agenda for the next meeting was discussed cross party consideration should be given to ways of managing the large volume of work for this Committee which could include setting up Informal Member Groups to consider for example financial issues.

(3) RESOLVED that the national and local context within which this MTP be set be noted.

73. Managing Directors update (verbal report)

(Item B3)

(1) Mr Badman gave a presentation on the BREEAM (BRE Environmental Assessment Method). A copy of the slides was circulated to Members.

(2) Mr Badman also raised the following issues:-
APA (Annual Performance Assessment) Results)

Mr Badman stated that the APA results were embargoed until 26 November 2007 and that the letter would go through the Cabinet process. With the agreement of the Leader and OfSTED he was able to give this meeting some broad details of the results of the assessment. He confirmed that Members would get a copy of the letter setting out the details after the embargo date.

Social Mobility

Mr Badman informed Members that there was to be a review of academies and Kent would be invited to submit evidence.

Mr Badman also referred to the announcement this week of a new Government Unit which would oversee Youth Justice Policy and Sponsorship of the Youth Justice Board and would merge responsibilities currently undertaken separately by the Ministry of Justice and Department of Children's Schools and Families (DCSF).

Mr Badman then addressed questions and comments from Members which included the following issues:-

- Mr Badman undertook to supply Mrs Angell with further information on carbon neutral schools scheme as soon as it became available.
- Regarding a question on ensuring that Academies served the communities that they were built for, Mr Badman undertook to ensure that Mr Hart was supplied with a copy of the Admissions Policy for the Marlowe Academy, he stated that his information was that the Marlowe Academy would accommodate all young people that would have been traditionally served by the Ramsgate School.
- In relation to a question on whether academies had a general admissions procedure, Mr Badman explained that what academies had to do was to establish a range of policies. General guidance was produced by the department and academies were guided to take account of the admissions guidance set out in these, therefore, there were a series of policies which were bespoke for each Academy.
- A Member mentioned that following on from the Select Committee on Flood Risk, it was important to ensure when designing new schools there were the necessary safeguards against the potential risk of flooding.

(3) Mr Badman stated that there was a lot happening in relation to legislation and national research for the Children's Families and Education area which Mr Badman's suggested that Members might find helpful to be informed of. The Chairman said that this was a matter that would be discussed further when Members met cross-party to discuss the Agenda for future meetings.

(4) RESOLVED that the Directors update be noted.

74. Kent Children's Trust Arrangements

(Item B4)

(Mrs Joy Ackroyd, Trust Development Manager and Rob Semens, Personnel Manager were present for this item)

(1) Mrs Ackroyd submitted a report which sets out progress made in developing Kent's Children's Trust arrangements and highlighted workforce and other issues related to this significant programme of change.

(2) Mrs Ackroyd invited Members to ask questions or to raise issues in relation to the Children's Trust. The issues raised included the following:-

- Members were informed that there would be a paper going to Cabinet on 26 November 2007 which would cover the issue of elected Members roles in relation to the new Children's Trust.
- A Member suggested that if there was not to be local representatives on the Local Children's Trust then there should be an opportunity for Local Boards to monitor and scrutinise the delivery of services locally.
- A view was expressed that Members should be involved in their **local** Children's Trusts as part of the Localism Agenda. This was also important in relation to Member's Corporate Parent role.

- Members were assured that a lot of work was taking place to ensure that the voice of parents and young people was at the heart of this developing agenda.
- Members were reminded that there was not a statutory obligation to have representatives of the Church schools on the Children's Trust. However, steps had been taken to ensure that they were represented on the Children's Trust.

(3) RESOLVED that this report and the comments made be noted and further updates be submitted to future meetings.

75. Looked After Children Review

(Item B5)

(Mr Paul Brightwell, Policy and Performance Manager, Looked after Children was present for this item)

(1) Mrs Hodges referred Members to the report which set out the key findings of the Looked after Children Review and sought endorsement from Members for Kent's Pledge.

(2) Mrs Hodges confirmed that the Kent Pledge had not yet been adopted and that the Policy Overview Committee was being given an early opportunity to comment on it. The Pledge had been developed through an extensive consultation exercise with young people. In response to a question, she stated that the issue of the "consistent adult" was a difficult one but they were looking at other ways to achieve a consistent adult in the life of the looked after child such as mentoring. The "consistent adult" may not be a social worker or a carer. She confirmed that this was one of the things that young people had said that they felt was important. Members would be given the opportunity to meet with young people who were looked after children in January.

(3) A Member made a point that the language in the Kent Pledge was challenging and not accessible. Mr Brightwell confirmed that this was being checked by a relevant organisation and would be improved before the Pledge was published.

(4) It was confirmed that there would be a further report which would contain more detail and also information to show that each commitment was measurable and to look at outcomes.

(5) It was noted that one of the requests was that the Freedom Bus Pass should be rolled out to looked after children to enable them to have the flexibility to make more use of their leisure time.

In relation to Page B5:6 the development of the Pledge, where it stated that the Pledge included two parts. There was a Pledge for children and young people in care of Kent County Council and children and young people placed in Kent by another local authority. A Member stated that ideally, the Pledge should contain the same promise for all children in care in Kent and that they should be treated in the same way whether they were KCC children or placed in Kent or an unaccompanied asylum seeker child.

(4) RESOLVED that the Looked after Children Review and the Kent Pledge be endorsed and it be noted that a further report would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee.

76. Integrated Youth Support Strategy

(Item B6)

(Ms Angela Slaven, Director Youth Offending and Substance Misuse and Mrs Joanna Wainwright, Director Commissioning (Specialist Services were present for this item)

(1) Ms Slaven presented a report to brief Members on work that had been undertaken to develop a high-level Integrated Youth Support Strategy which KCC were required to produce. Although a great deal of work was already in place it needed to be drawn together to ensure a coherent and consistent approach to working across county with young people aged 14-19 years. The Strategy would reflect a partnership approach and define the required and desired outcomes for young people in this age range. This draft had already been considered by the Communities Policy Overview Committee and the Children's Trust Board and would go back to the Children's Trust Board in January for further consideration. She explained that behind this document there would be detailed operational plans.

(2) Ms Slaven invited Members views on the draft and the approach taken and the comments made by Members included the following:-

- A Member stressed that many young people were vulnerable for example, there were statistics showing that young people in the 17-18 plus age range were five times more likely to be victims than perpetrators.
- It was important to make young people feel valued and it was emphasised that young people were our "present" and that we should be looking at young people as they are now and valuing them now. It was important that young people were given a belief in their ability to make a contribution and that the use of case studies within the Strategy was important.
- Positive contribution such as Skills Force should be acknowledged.
- It was emphasised that information, advice and guidance to young people should be independent and appropriate. It was stated that Connexions Career Advisers were sometimes not popular with schools if they advised against sixth form as a career path.
- Ms Slaven confirmed there were a series of visits planned to ensure that young people had the opportunity to consider this document.
- In terms of consulting with voluntary sector groups, this had been done via the Children's Trust Board.
- Ms Slaven confirmed that the aim was to have a strategy as an overarching document and for it to be a county-wide integrated strategy and consultations were being carried out with Members and partners to develop it.

- It was hoped that within the operational plan, there would be much more detail which would reflect the whole range of services and groups.
- In terms of the National Youth Strategy, it was hoped that there was nothing at odds with this within the KCC strategy.
- Reverend Canon Smith stated that he did not recall the Church organisation being consulted on this and he would like to be consulted explicitly on this.
- The Strategy should be used to avoid duplication or overlapping of provision for young people within areas which was a waste of resources. This would also help with allocation of resources
- It was confirmed that the Strategy should be a co-ordination of Youth Services so that young people and families would know what facilities were available in their areas. .
- It was important for Members to support at every opportunity the youth facilities that were available within their area. Both provided by KCC and by the voluntary sector.
- In relation to extended schools, KCC was in a key position. It was very frustrating for Members to see schools locked up and playing fields padlocked whilst young people hung around on street corners. However, it was pointed out by officers that often young people did not want to use schools facilities outside of school hours.

(3) RESOLVED that comment made by Members on the draft Integrated Youth Support Strategy be noted.

**77. Unit Review (Including Designated and Specialist Provision and Very Severe and Complex Need Support for Children and Young People with Special Educational Need at Mainstream Schools
(Item B7)**

(Mrs Joanna Wainwright, Director, Commissioning (Specialist Services) was present for this item)

(1) Mrs Wainwright introduced a report which updated Members on the progress of the Unit Review and consultations to date.

(2) Members were invited to comment on the progress on the Unit Review and the following issues were raised:-

- Page B7:2 - there was mention of specific disabilities such as a hearing impediment, being visually impaired etc. and there was a statutory duty to have teachers qualified in teaching pupils with these. The inclusion agenda required resources to follow the child. It was confirmed that within specialist units, teachers had the appropriate qualifications.
- In relation to the speech and language issue and what could be done to add additional support across the county a Member mentioned the underspend in the Children's Centres budget. It was confirmed that

Children's Centres were often the first place where a child's needs were noticed and it was important that when a child's special needs were identified, help was available so that they could be prepared for school and that transitional arrangements could be made with school.

- In response to a question on who parents could appeal to if they did not believe their child was getting appropriate support, it was confirmed that all children at a specialist unit would have a statement of special educational needs and therefore the local authority would be responsible for them regardless of how or where the child was educated and so parents should appeal to the local authority.
- It was confirmed that funding for statemented pupils and school action and school plus pupils had followed the child for the last four to five years. Funding was closely monitored and there was an annual review of progress which required the schools to account for how the funding had been used.

(3) RESOLVED that comments made by Members on the progress of the Unit Review be noted.

78. Statutory Guidance on the Early Years Outcomes Duty *(Item B8)*

(Mrs Carol Parsons, Director, Standard and Achievement and Ms Jennie Landsberg Principal Adviser, Early Years and Childcare were present for this item)

(1) Mrs Parsons presented a report on the Childcare Act 2006 which introduced for the first time, a duty on Local Authorities to improve all young children's outcomes from birth to five years of age, and reduce inequalities between them, through integrated early childhood services. Members were invited to ask questions on the report.

(2) A Member referred to page B8:3, where it stated that it would be up to the Children's Trust to determine who was involved beyond the statutory partners, and asked that Members should have an involvement in the Children's Trust as they had valuable local knowledge. It was confirmed that one major forum where Members could be involved was through the Local Strategic Partnership.

(3) Mrs Parsons confirmed that it was the intention to focus on children in deprived areas so that poverty or low incomes were not a factor in children's attainment. It would be for Children's Trust to put into place performance measures.

(4) RESOLVED that the implication of this new statutory duty; and the report be noted.

79. Standards and Achievements - 2007 *(Item B9)*

(Mrs Carol Parsons, Director, Standard and Achievement, Mrs M King, Principal Adviser (Primary) and Mr D Garman, Joint Head of Schools Advisory Service)

(1) The Committee received a report on the outcomes of assessments and examinations in Kent schools in 2007. Member asked questions on the report.

(2) In response to a question on what the authority was doing to overcome the challenges set out in the report in relation to Key Stage 4, Mrs Parsons stated that there was a strong nationally acknowledged programme of targeted support to match the needs of schools, which supported schools with the greatest need first. It was important to track pupil's progress and to target early interventions.

(3) A Member asked why there were so few male primary school teachers and what could be done to encourage more men to enter the profession as they were important role models. Ms Parsons stated that one of the issues was the level of salary and the perception that primary school children were perhaps better catered for by women. An interesting factor was the changing profile of the professional staff in schools, with the proportion of staff who were teachers falling significantly. With a higher proportion of staff in a range of support roles, from student advisors to technicians there were more opportunities for boys to have male role models in school.

(4) In response to a request for a definition of "contextual value added", Mrs Parsons stated that children in a school with high levels of deprivation may have lower starting points of entry. Despite making good progress, the level of academic attainment it may not be very high. She explained that it was possible to have a low attaining school that was not underperforming, by taking account of social factors such as family background of pupils and a range of contextual factors. It was acknowledged by Mr Garman that the DCSF in allocating funding recognised that some schools in Kent had bigger challenges than others and 19 schools received additional funding to recognise the challenges they face in order to lift performance at Key Stage 2. There were a number of programmes being focussed in the deprived areas of greatest need in Kent.

80. Participation Post 16, Performance at 19, September Guarantee and the 14-19 County Wide Prospectus

(Item B10)

(Mr D Garman, Joint Head of Schools Advisory Service)

(1) Mr Garman introduced a paper which provided an analysis of participation Post 16, performance at 19 and an explanation of the September Guarantee and the county-wide 14-19 prospectus.

(2) In response to a question from a Member, Mr Garman confirmed that where it referred to staying on beyond 16, it meant staying in the same school. Although in situations where schools shared sixth form facilities, if they stayed in the host school and used other provisions as well then this would count.

(3) Mr Garman referred to the September Guarantee which had been introduced in 2007 by the DCSF. The local authority was expected to show by 1 September 2007 that all Year 11 pupils had received an offer and was either in education or

training. As at 19 October 2007, KCC were able to demonstrate that 87% of young people in Year 11 were in education or training. However, 889 young people had not received an offer and Connexions were working to reduce this figure. If the further education colleges were taken into account, the figure of 87% would increase to 95%.

(4) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

81. Select Committee – PSHE – Action sheet for implementing recommendations

(Item C1)

(Ms Sarah Lewis, Policy Officer and Mr Allan Foster, Subject Adviser for PSHE were present for this item)

(1) Ms Lewis presented a report which provided comments on the 18 recommendations made by Member's of the Select Committee who considered PSHE and Children's Health during the second half of 2006.

(2) Mr Tolputt, who had been a Member of the Select Committee, emphasised the importance of pressing for the inspection of PSHE to be included in the OfSTED inspection.

(3) Mrs Hodges, in response to a question confirmed that funding for the training of teachers for PSHE could come from the DSG. However, it would need to be agreed by the Schools Forum and therefore as the statutory consultation had taken place, it would not be possible to do it this year, but it could form part of next year's consultation and it would be up to schools to consider whether they would wish to support this.

(4) Mr Tolputt gave the example of the school that had set up a clinic which although required funding would be saving money in terms of the costs of exclusions and social problems caused by unwanted pregnancies etc. He stated that the rate of teenage pregnancies in Shepway had reduced since they had got a clinic in one of the schools.

(5) In response to a Members question on whether walk in clinics were what was required, Ms Lewis stated that they had consulted widely with health professionals and had been informed that from time to time nurses could sit in clinics and nobody came in but in areas of high need these clinics worked well as there was a need for flexibility when dealing with young people.

(6) RESOLVED that the report be noted the action taken by officers in relation to the recommendations is endorsed.

82. Select Committees update

(Item C2)

(1) The Committee received a report which updated the Committee Members on the Select Committee Topic Review Programme.

(2) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the plans to monitor the recommendations of the PSHE Select Committees be noted;
- (b) the proposed establishment of a Select Committee on Vulnerable Children be noted and that if necessary the Overview and Scrutiny Manager in consultation with the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Liberal Democrat Spokesman on the Policy Overview Committee be given delegated authority to approve the Terms of Reference of the Select Committee on behalf of the Policy Overview Committee; and
- (c) the update of the new Select Committee Topic Review Programme be noted.