

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

LOCAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES PARTNERSHIPS SUB COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Local Children's Services Partnerships Sub Committee held at Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Wednesday, 22 April 2009.

PRESENT: Mrs A D Allen, Mr J Curwood, Mr G A Horne MBE, Mr I T N Jones, DL, Mr M J Northey and Mr M J Vye

ALSO PRESENT: Mr L B Ridings, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Educational Achievement

PRESENT: **Representing LCSP: Canterbury City and County** Mrs Ruth Herron, (LCSP Manager), Mrs Jane Robinson, (Chair of the LCSP Board), Mrs Sarah Kilvington, (Education Welfare Officer/Team Manager 14-19yrs), **Representing LCSP: Ashford 1** Mrs Laura Froude, (LCSP Manager), Mr Malcolm Ramsey, (Chair of the Partnership Board and Headteacher of Towers School), Mr Allan Collando, (Children's Centre Co-ordinator), **Representing LCSP: Ashford Rural**, Mrs Helen Anderson, (LCSP Manager), Mrs Diane Butler, (District Manager for Social Services and Vice Chair of the Partnership Board) and Mrs Sharon Clarke, (Locality Clinical Co-ordinator).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs J Ackroyd (Trust Development Manager), Mr D Adams (Area Children's Services Officer, Ashford & Shepway), Mrs S Morris (Head of Strategic Planning & Review) and Mrs C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

5. Minutes - 12 March 2009

(Item. 2)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 March 2009 were correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

6. Annual Report of Canterbury City and Country Local Children's Services Partnership

(Item. 3)

(1) Members considered a report that provided background information on the progress made and embedding of the processes for the Canterbury city and Country LCSP.

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

(3) In response to concerns raised by Mr Jones regarding the use of the misspelling of the word "topix", not using capital letters and the need for quality teaching, Mrs Robinson reassured Mr Jones this was just how young people liked to

personalise and badge services and agreed that the quality of teaching was paramount in the classroom and confirmed the professionalism of the teachers in the Canterbury area.

(4) In response to Mr Vye's suggestion that there should be consistent outcomes across the county accompanied by the need to measure and monitor those outcomes for young people, although the emphasis and way support was delivered may vary, Mrs Herron advised that the focus of the headings, for example, drug/alcohol may be different was due to the fact that this was a larger issue in the Canterbury area probably due to the large student population and may not be a focus in another Partnership area. Mrs Morris added that her department provided data to all of the Partnerships, which helped each Partnership focus and prioritise a responsive plan in line with the framework.

(5) In response to a question by Mr Vye, Mrs Herron reassured him that there were opportunities for the Partnership Chairmen to meet, along with the LCSP Managers. They met six times per year and in addition also attended the Partnership Managers Group which enabled them to share information and to maintain consistency across the Partnerships.

(6) In response to a question by the Reverend Genders on how areas linked across each other, Mrs Herron explained that there were two boards in Canterbury which had continued crossover of work. They shared Minutes of their meetings and were both aware of each others projects as well as carrying out joint projects. There were also meetings between the headteachers. Mr Adams explained that there had been moves made to pool resources, especially for smaller partnerships.

(7) In response to a question by Mr Northey on consulting young people and what structure there was to keep young peoples views and what they wanted, Mrs Morris advised that she felt it was about having an honest discussion with young people including what constraints had to be made. Work was being undertaken to improve how this communication was carried out. Mrs Robinson explained that there were school councils in the Canterbury schools, all young people on the council had a viewpoint but they knew the parameters and had a good perception. She gave the example of a joint cluster of councils who looked at the issue of bullying in schools which had worked out very well. Mrs Herron concluded that children who were not at school could be contacted through "Hot Topix".

(8) Mr Northey felt that young people elected to the Youth County Council were not representative.

(9) In response to a question by Mr Northey, Mrs Herron advised that all schools had "student voice" which had become essential, and a very powerful way to ballot schools. Online surveys were used in all schools in Canterbury under "not in education, employment or training" (NEET) those young people were contacted individually. Children's feedback was hugely important in monitoring the resources provided and what was needed.

(10) In response to a question regarding Ashford 1 and Rural by Mr Jones, Mrs Froude advised that they did share information with Local Members on secondary issues for 14-19 year olds development in the town which helped organise provision.

(11) Mr Jones expressed his frustration with the choice of language and acronyms in the reports presented at this meeting, Mr Adams suggested that some thought needed to be given to the quality assurance of reports prior to the POC.

(12) In response to the explanation that Canterbury faced many transitional families such as army personnel as well as migrants who did not speak English, Mr Adams advised that there were different pressures in each partnership area. Where there were army personnel it was a fact that there was regular movement of children in and out of the area, therefore the area needed to respond flexibly. Some of the schools in those areas had provided teaching assistants from the migrant communities; i.e. the Nepalese and Polish communities. This created a staff resource in certain schools that had expertise in those communities that other Partnerships could call upon. Mr Ramsey added that his school had 13 Nepalese students. The appointment of a Nepalese classroom assistant had worked very well. This had also helped with the migrant parents of the pre-school children engaged in the school community.

(13) In response to a question by Mrs Allen, Mrs Froude advised that the Partnership did refer to the Local Area Agreement regarding health issues and included data in relation to National Performance indicators. This was helpful when bidding for health funding on issues such as 'Tackling Obesity'.

(14) In response to a suggestion by Mr Vye, Mrs Froude advised that the Partnerships were in discussions regarding pooling resources through aligning. She gave the example of the increase in social services referrals causing difficulties in staffing and where pooling resources would have been beneficial but was unable to happen. Mr Adams explained that the issue was about accountability and value for money, ensuring the function met with the objectives. This would need to be discussed at the Kent Children's Trust. Mr Ridings concluded that this was a national issue and discussions were already taking place to remedy the situation. Officers were requested to produce a report on the issues relating to aligning funding to provide services where there are gaps that could lead to a pilot scheme.

(15) Mr Vye said that the Sub Committee needed to be aware of the Partnerships pinch points so that Members could offer support by making representation.

(16) Mrs Morris advised that the Children's Trust Board would be a statutory board responsible for the Children and Young Person's Plan (CYPP) and her office would be supplying the costings and monitoring what the Board was doing towards the CYPP. The measures were due from central government.

(17) Mr Adams explained that the Partnership were eager to find solutions to the vacancies for social workers. He suggested that alternative ways to manage the number of vacancies may need to be found but this was a debate to be had. Mrs Ackroyd added that this was the power of the LCSPs, being able to have deeper debates to find new solutions for old problems.

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

7. Annual Report of Ashford 1 Local Children's Services Partnership
(Item. 4)

- (1) Members received a detailed report that included the background to the Ashford 1 LCSP and its progress since it was launched in September 2008.
- (2) Members were shown a dvd on “One Children’s Workforce” and Mrs Froude gave a brief presentation.
- (3) Members thanked the officers for the dvd commenting that it was an extremely useful exercise. Mr Ramsey advised that “Every Child Matters” made this happen. Mr Ridings felt that the dvd should be included in the Members induction and shown at the CMT.
- (4) Mr Ramsey highlighted that there was a nil permanent exclusion policy throughout the schools in the Ashford 1 and Ashford Rural areas. All the Headteachers were convinced that they should work to this policy. Fixed term exclusions were carried out at school rather than at home to allow the child to gain confidence and improve their learning opportunities. In the past excluded students were sent to the Beaver and Brook Pupil Referral Units, that funding was now going into schools to make their own provision, for example joined up working with social services. Mr Ramsey advised that the Leader of Kent County Council had provided money for vocational training in schools. The schools had been able to manage pupil moves between schools which was working well. The vocational element was very constructive, i.e. courses in hair, beauty, restaurant work and carpentry, and had improved attendance too. Mr Adams said that keeping those children in school meant they were still able to have access to other support services which wrap around schools.
- (5) In response to a question by Mr Horne, Mr Ramsey advised that links with Further Education (FE) in Ashford was difficult because of the current position of the local College. However, schools worked well together. He gave the example of North School which offered land based management. Mr Ramsey added that Tower School offered hairdressing and business studies and these facilities were open to students from other schools. There was a member from the FE/HE colleges on the Kent Children’s Trust Board.
- (6) In response to a concern by the Reverend Genders that resources would be directed at particular targets for marginal pupils, Mr Ramsey explained that the resources were moving barriers. There was a need to focus on the children’s needs and any barriers that needed to be moved. Mr Adams added that the Partnership was looking to deliver most of what they could but there needed to be a lot of work and focus on the problems within the areas.
- (7) Mr Vye referred to the role of the voluntary sector and requested a report on how commissioning worked. Officers agreed to provide this report to a future meeting.
- (8) Mrs Herron felt there was a need to establish the location of the voluntary sector services within each area. Mr Vye suggested that the council for voluntary services had been involved they may be able to assist with this task. Mrs Ackroyd added that Pathfinders guidance needed to be revised and strengthened so that it was responsive to what voluntary agencies fed back to the Partnerships.
- (9) RESOLVED that the comments made by Members and the report be noted.

8. Annual Report of Ashford Rural Local Children's Services Partnership (Item. 5)

- (1) The Sub Committee received a detailed report which covered the progress made since the LCSP was established in September 2008 with feedback from partners helping to further define the focus of shared areas of activity to achieve the targets in the Kent CYPP as well as addressing local issues.
- (2) Mrs Anderson, Local Children's Services Manager, gave a brief introduction highlighting key points detailed in the report which included the following:-
- (3) There were 12,500 children and young people in the Ashford Rural area, 70% of which lived in the rural area. Ashford Rural was the 5th least deprived area in Kent but had pockets of deprivations.
- (4) Mrs Anderson felt that the shared attendance policy throughout the Ashford area detailed on page 102 of the report had a great impact.
- (5) In recognising that there was a need to support primary to secondary education a social worker assistant was appointed to work with families to see children through Year 6 and Year 7.
- (6) Both Partnerships for Ashford were working well together.
- (7) Transport was an issue in Ashford Rural area.
- (8) There was a need to continue learning and consulting between the Partnerships and the Youth Service about young people. There was also an aim to develop work between the Teenage Youth Forum Group.
- (9) Mrs Anderson advised that the restructuring of the Children's Centres within the Ashford area had begun and that work was still needed to be undertaken to develop outreach.
- (10) Mrs Anderson advised that a pilot had been launched across Ashford named "Active Movement", a multi-agency and parent centred programme providing fully integrated working to share knowledge about what makes well balanced children.
- (11) Mrs Butler explained that her role as District Manager for Social Services was to manage risk which covered the issue of families in crisis which she stressed could not be watered down. There were logistical problems in covering this and a need for other solutions, preventative measures. A post was to be funded in light of the rise of children on the Child Protection Plan from 67 to 97. Mrs Anderson emphasised the impact and effect of not having social workers to deal with these increases. She asked that the Sub Committee be mindful of the invisible children; those not in school and those that did not access Children's Centres. The Chairman felt that this was where the role of the Health visitor could play a part.
- (12) Mrs Clark advised that the Health visitors were an expensive service but very necessary but unless the net was cast wide it would not be possible to catch the problems down the line. She felt that Children's Centres were marvellous and well

signposted although there were people who would not use those facilities which was the real challenge. Health visitors still carried out five visits in a child's first three years.

(13) In response to questions by Mr Northey, Mrs Butler advised that officers had been discussing how to give children a feeling a security while allowing them to take risks. They had been looking at examples from around the world and had chosen "Active Movement" from New Zealand to form a pilot.

(14) The Reverend Genders gave details of the "Good Childhood" Conference that he felt may be of interest to Members of the Sub Committee due to be held in June 2009.

(15) RESOLVED that the comments made by Members and the report be noted.

9. Date of next meeting

(Item. 6)

Thursday 23 July 2009 at 10:00 am in Waterton Lee Room, Invicta House.