

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

SCRUTINY BOARD

MINUTES of a meeting of the Scrutiny Board held in the Darent Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Thursday, 10 March 2011.

PRESENT: Mr E E C Hotson (Chairman), Mrs A D Allen, Mr C J Capon, Mr M C Dance, Mrs E M Tweed Mr K Smith

ALSO PRESENT: Mr D A Hirst, Mr P W A Lake Mr L B Ridings, MBE

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms D Fitch (Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Policy Overview)), Mr P Sass (Head of Democratic Services and Local Leadership) Mr P D Wickenden (Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

43. Membership

(Item 3)

It was agreed that it would be more appropriate to elect a new Vice-Chairman at the next meeting of the Board when the new Membership of the Board was in place following the approval of the new Policy Overview and Scrutiny structure by the County Council on 6 April 2011.

RESOLVED that it be noted that Mr N Chard (Chairman of the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee) was now a member of this Board.

44. Minutes -1 February 2011

(Item 5)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2011 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

45. Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

(Item 6)

(1) Mr Lake, Deputy Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services, gave a verbal update on CAMHS on behalf of the Cabinet Member. He stated that at the meeting of the Children's Trust Board on 4 March 2011, CAMHS had been at the top of the agenda. There had been two inspections of CAMHS, one by the national support team and the other by Ofsted. The issues with CAMHS had been known for some time but had been passed between KCC and health.

(2) Mr Lake informed the Board of the numbers of young people identified at the different tiers of delivery, there were over 51,000 young people at tier 1, 24,000 young people at tier 2, 6,000 young people at tier 3 and 274 young people at tier 4. He had visited the new tier 4 centre and had been impressed by this facility and was grateful for the work being done in this area by the Maudsley Hospital Foundation Trust. He circulated information that had been prepared for Members by the Director

of Child Health Commissioning, NHS Eastern & Coastal Kent and NHS West Kent PCT's which included waiting times to access CAMHS. Although these had reduced from September 2010 he acknowledged that they were still too long and that only putting in massive support would bring these down to an acceptable level. In Canterbury and Shepway they were targeting the 33 young people who had been waiting the longest and were holding extra clinics on a Saturday to reduce the backlog.

(3) Mr Lake informed the Board that Mrs Whittle, Cabinet Member for Specialist Children's Services, was determined to establish a Children's Services Improvement Panel of 8 Elected Members which would initially meet on a monthly basis. This Panel would report to the Leader.

(4) Mr Lake referred to the Ofsted recommendations which mainly referred to Looked After Children. There was a need to focus services on 16 – 18 year olds. Children's services tended to finish at 16 and there was then a gap until they were picked up again at 18 by the adult service. This gap had now been filled by Primary Care Trust funding. A Commissioning CAMHS model was being developed. It was important that the CAMHS worked closely with the Health Service so that there was no duplication of resources.

(5) Members then made a number of comments and Mr Lake addressed a number of questions which included the following:-

- This was not a new issue, as 3 or 4 years ago there had been an awareness at Executive level that there were potential problems with the service. A pilot on emotional intelligence had been suggested but not taken up.
- There was a shortage of psychologists in the UK. Those that were available tended to use a lot of their time in report writing which made capacity for work on early intervention difficult.
- A Member identified the key problem area as being the need for intervention at tier 1.5 to 2.
- Mr Lake commended the establishment of Children's Centres as being a major contributor to early intervention between the ages of 1 and 3.
- Mr Lake expressed a determination to increase the number of Occupational Therapists and to generally provide support to permanent staff. He acknowledged that there were too many agency staff employed in this service.
- Mr Lake stated that the key to improving the service lay in working in an effective partnership with Health colleagues. The Health and Well Being Board, once established would have a key role to play in joined up working.
- This was an issue that cut across a number of Directorates and Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- Mr Lake emphasised the importance of holding those responsible for this service to account. It was important to monitor progress, or a lack of it and then take action quickly. This would be the role of the Children's Services Improvement Panel.
- In response to a question on what was being done to improve the waiting times in Shepway, Mr Lake referred to the work being done by Mr Darbyshire (Senior Commissioning Manager for CAMHS). He stated that the issue for Shepway was that there were a high number of young people waiting for an

Autistic Spectrum Disorder assessment. 20 extra staff were being trained to carry out this type of assessment.

- A Member pointed out that the number of young people waiting for an assessment (82,000) was a high proportion of the high percentage of the total number of young people in Kent.
- It was important to ensure that there was a successful transition for young people from Children's to Adult Services and no gaps.

(6) It was acknowledged that Head Teachers of primary schools recognised the importance of early intervention from the CAMHS. However it was suggested that Head Teachers from secondary schools sometimes did not see it as their role to signpost this service if a young person appeared to be experiencing problems. It was recognised that there should be other professions within the secondary school who could manage these issues.

(7) Members thanked Mr Lake for his open report and for answering Members questions.

(8) RESOLVED that (a) as an Improvement Panel was to be established there was no need to set up a Select Committee to consider this issue and (b) as this was a cross cutting issue a progress report be submitted to the Scrutiny Board twice a year.

46. Enhancing and Improving the Overview and Scrutiny Process

(Item 7)

(1) The Chairman explained that a draft paper had been prepared which was progressive and reflected the views of the informal meeting with the Leader and the Deputy Leader following the last meeting of the Board. There was further work to be done to this paper and it would be submitted to the April meeting of the Board.

(2) There would be an opportunity during the "sharing of best practice" item later in the meeting for Members to put forward further suggestions for issues that they would like to be included in the report.

47. Select Committee update

(Item 8)

(1) Mr Wickenden introduced a report which updated the Board on the current Select Committee Topic Review programme and invited Members to consider draft guidelines for the webcasting of some Select Committee meetings. He stated that a revised timetable for the Select Committee on Educational Attainment would be submitted to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Board.

(2) RESOLVED that (a) the progress of the Select Committees on Educational Attainment and Dementia and the Student Journey be noted and;
(b) the Board agrees to the webcasting of Select Committee meetings, with approval being granted on a review by review basis (with the proposal for webcasting being agreed by the Select Committee at the same time as it approves its timetable and list of witnesses) and that the guidance for webcasting as set out in Appendix B to the report be approved.

48. Sharing of good practice/enhancing and Improving the Overview and Scrutiny Process

(Item 9)

(1) The Chairman introduced this item and explained that following the informal meeting held on 1 February 2011 a draft paper had been prepared, which included comments made by Members at that meeting. He proposed going through the subjects covered by this paper and invited Members to make comments and to add any other issues that they would like included in the paper that would be submitted to the April meeting of the Board.

(2) The following points were made:-

- *Access to meetings* - there was a need to look at the way that we engaged with the public. Reference was made to the letter from Bob Neil (Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at Communities and Local Government) and the emphasis on making use of available technology. This tied in with the theme in Bold Steps for Kent of “putting the citizen in control”.
- *Publicity for O/S* – the Chairman referred to a meeting that he had attended with editors of local papers and a press release that he had issued.
- *Performance monitoring* – Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees had a role in monitoring “Bold Steps for Kent”.
- *Policy Development* – there was a need to ensure that Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committees had the opportunity to have an input at an early stage.
- *Agenda setting* – there should be adequate information available in the Forward Plan of Key Decisions and through other sources so that Members could decide which items they wished the POSC to have an input into. The agenda meeting was an opportunity for the Chairman to ask the Cabinet Member what issues were coming forward which the POSC could assist with.
- *Scrutiny* – it was suggested that clarity was needed around when was the appropriate time to scrutinise an issue.
- *Rapporteur* - this was an issue that would be given further consideration.
- *Select Committee Monitoring* - there was a process for this set out in the Constitution – Members need to consider if this needed to be revised.
- *Scrutiny in the locality* – when Locality Boards were being established their role in scrutiny need to be considered.
- *Select Committees* – it was suggested that there should be feedback half way through the work of the Select Committee setting out the emerging issues.

(3) Mr Wickenden and Mr Kit Smith referred to an LGIU conference that they had attended recently and outlined some of the key issues raised at this event. These included:-

- With direct delivery of local authorities diminishing, who was going to hold new service providers, including the voluntary and private sector, to account
- Acknowledgement of the need for strategic scrutiny at a county level.
- The need to find new level of interface for accountability – currently most of this was taking place at county level but in accordance with the spirit of the localism bill, non strategic matters needed to be moved closer to communities, possibly through Locality Boards.

(4) Members made some points about the development of Locality Boards and the progress being made by Districts on suggested models for their areas. Members expressed a wish to have more information on the development of Locality Boards, although this was not something that came within the remit of the Scrutiny Board.

RESOLVED: that the comments made by Members be noted and incorporated into the paper on Enhancing and Improving the Overview and Scrutiny Process, which would be submitted to the next meeting of the Board.

49. Mr P Wickenden - Overview, Scrutiny and Localism Manager

(1) Mr Kit Smith expressed his personal thanks to Mr Wickenden for the support that he had given him as a non executive Member. Mr Wickenden would be moving to the Customer and Communities Directorate on 4 April 2011 along with the Community Engagement Team.

(2) The Chairman, on behalf of the Scrutiny Board, thanked Mr Wickenden for the contribution that he had made in leading the Overview and Scrutiny Team. He commended Mr Wickenden's ability to understand the Members, to know how they were thinking and to bridge the gap between the Executive and non executive Members and partners to develop and support the County Council's Overview and Scrutiny process. He would be a great loss to Democratic Services and a great asset to the new Directorate.