

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN, FAMILIES & EDUCATION - VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND PARTNERSHIPS POLICY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children, Families & Education - Vulnerable Children and Partnerships Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Medway Room, Sessions House, County Hall, Maidstone on Friday, 6th November, 2009.

PRESENT: Mr A H T Bowles, Mrs P T Cole, Mr H J Craske, Mr D A Hirst, Mr S Manion, Mr K Smith, Mr C T Wells, Mr M J Vye and Mrs A D Allen (Chairman)

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES: Dr D Wadman

PARENT GOVERNORS: Mr P Myers

PRESENT: Mrs S V Hohler and Mr L B Ridings

IN ATTENDANCE: Ms R Turner (Managing Director Children, Families and Education), Mr B Anderson (Director Children's Social Services), Mrs J Wainwright (Director Commissioning (Specialist Services)), Mrs J Ackroyd (Trust Development Manager), Mr P Brightwell (Policy & Performance Manager - Looked After Children), Ms P Harris (Head of Service) and Mrs C A Singh (Democratic Services Officer)

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

9. Membership
(Item. A1)

The Committee noted that Mr D Hirst had replaced Mr K Pugh on this Committee.

10. Election of Vice Chairman
(Item. A3)

Mrs A Allen proposed, seconded by Mr H J Craske, Dr D Wadman as Vice Chairman of this Committee.

Agreed without a vote

11. Future Meeting Dates 2010
(Item. A5)

Members noted the revised meeting dates for this Committee for 2010 as listed below and were asked to delete 10 November meeting from their diaries.

Fri, 15 January *(Joint meeting of the 3 POCs)*
Wed, 31 March
Tuesday, 29 June
Fri, 17 September 2.00 pm (reserved date)
Thurs, 21 October

(All meetings will commence at 10.00 am unless otherwise stated)

12. Minutes - 18 September 2009

(Item. A6)

RESOLVED that the Minutes be approved subject to the word 'was' being altered to read 'were' on page 3 Paragraph 8 (1) line 2.

13. Children Champion's Board Minutes - 23 September 2009

(Item. A7)

(1) Members were advised that the 'Protecting Children in Kent Review' was ongoing and would be reported to the County Council in December.

(2) RESOLVED that the Minutes be noted subjected to the word 'Keys' on page 7 Item 11 (1)(a) being altered to read 'Key' and on page 8 paragraph (g) the word 'recoded' being altered to read 'recorded'.

14. Deputy Lead Member's and Service Director's Update

(Item. B1)

(1) The Committee received a verbal update from Mr L Ridings, Deputy Lead Member (Vulnerable Children).

(2) Mr Ridings highlighted key issues that had taken place since the Committee last met which included the following;

- Vacancies for Social Workers in the Children Social Services advising that already 62 newly qualified Social Workers had been appointed from this country, 29 from Boston USA and 9 from North Europe.
- The unannounced inspection had not taken place but was due in November or early December.
- The ICS data system, used by Social Workers to input and retrieve data on their case work, continued to cause problems due to the stability of the system. The input of data was now being carried out by administrative staff rather than Social Workers. Members were advised that all exemplars would be in place by April 2010 which would mean less paper work.

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

(4) Mr Vye referred to Partnerships and reminded Members that the next phase of the review would be a corporate strategic overview; he felt that Members should scrutinise and feed back what was happening in their own electoral divisions as well as looking at issues across the County. Dr Wadman concurred suggesting that at local level local knowledge should be used.

(5) RESOLVED that the verbal update and the Members comments be noted.

15. Kent Healthy Weight Strategy
(Item. B2)

(Ms M Peachey, Kent Director of Public Health and Mr M Lemon, Head of Policy were present to answer questions)

(1) The Committee was presented with a covering report and a higher level summary and distillation of the Healthy Weight Strategy, by Primary Care Trust (PCT) colleagues, that was drafted in the second half of 2008. The document provided a framework for KCC and other organisations to work within, when designing and planning interventions designed to address issues of healthy weight and promote healthier lifestyles.

(2) The Chairman welcomed Mr Lemon and Ms Peachey and asked Mr Lemon to introduce the report. Mr Lemon explained that the problems and the causes of the problem of obesity were very complex. They included peoples; economic and social situation, their relationship to food and alcohol that had developed over the years and the decrease in activity within daily life due to driving everywhere and not walking as much as in the past. He suggested that as obesity was due to a wide range of issues it needed to be tackled in a coordinated way. The Strategy followed Government Guidance 'Healthy Weight, Healthy Lives'. He directed Members to page 16 of the report, which outlined the 7 elements of the Healthy Weight Strategy for Kent as follows:

- Children, healthy growth and healthy weight
- Promotion of healthier food choices
- Building physical activity into our lives
- Creating incentives for better health
- Personalised advice and support
- Using opportunities in the KCC Regeneration Framework
- Making our messages more effective through social marketing

(3) He concluded that it was forecast that child obesity was starting to fall.

(4) Ms Peachey drew Members attention to page 28 of the report that set out the measures of obesity in 2006/07. The chart showed that in East Kent there had been a significant reduction in the obesity levels, 8.5%, this was partly due to the schools meeting healthy schools standards. The chart also indicated that West Kent statistics had risen to 9.6% and this was being looked into as there was no clear reason why this had happened. The data was from the measurements of Year 6 as well as reception children since 2006.

(5) In response to a question by the Chairman, Mrs Wainwright advised that following the last meeting of this Committee, Officers had been speaking to the

Chief Executives and the appropriate Service Directors of the PCTs regarding Health Visitors. A report would be submitted to a future meeting.

(6) In response to a question by Mr Smith, Ms Peachey advised that the forecasts had been modified to allow more accurate data. The height and weight of children were measured, starting at reception year in schools since 2006.

(7) Mr Ridings advised that obesity was only picked up from when all children were measured when they start school but he felt that their eating habits were already formalised before the reception year at school and more work should be done before reception year.

(8) Mr Ridings referred to page 19 and the targets for West Kent PCT on breast feeding against those targets for East Kent PCT he felt that the targets should be coordinated as he felt that it would be difficult for West Kent to meet its targets.

(9) In response to a question by Mr Hirst, Mr Lemon explained that the aim remained the same for today as in the past; for people to enjoy a long healthy life only that the way that it was done now had changed. 100 years ago the issues would have been; infectious diseases, cleaner air, cleaner water etc now the issues are; cancers drinking, smoking, obesity and particular life style activities, the challenges now have changed but the aim remained the same.

(10) Mr Vye expressed his views that unless parents were convinced obesity in children was a bad thing nothing would happen. Children's Centres were playing a role with the breast feeding programme, although there was no reference to the early years setting in the report.

(11) Mr Bowles highlighted some concerns he had with the habits of young people grazing throughout the day rather than having proper meals. He felt the Children's Centres acted as a buffer for those families without the backing of mothers and grandmothers experience.

(12) In reply to a question by Mr Bowles on the Differentiation between the number of children breast fed in East Kent and West Kent and why 2/3rds of the nursing mothers felt it was wrong to breast feed their children, Ms Peachey said that the figures within the report were anomalies because one set of figures were based on 2011 and the other figures were based on 2013. She agreed to check with the PCT on why the dates were different.

(13) Mr Smith commented on the huge industry of initiatives for losing weight . He felt this was unsustainable with the current level of support and the budget cuts in the current economic climate and the time it would take. In response Mr Lemon advised that in terms of the cost and whether it was affordable to maintain and do this there was an argument that we can not afford not to. He advised that the cost of looking after people with unhealthy life styles had been estimated at £178 billion per year. The Strategy/Initiatives were reflected and complimented the Strategic documents of other Kent County Council Directorates and gave the example of the Environment Department promoting the use of the countryside; it was also the business of the Partnerships eg the PCTs and the Borough Councils too.

(14) In response to a concerns raised by Mr Craske, Ms Peachey advised that alcohol was dealt with separately through the Select Committee 'Alcohol Strategy' which dealt with raising awareness on alcohol units etc. A lot of the reports recommendations were aimed at young people in schools and about healthy choices, teenage pregnancy and a whole range of other issues. Mr Hirst suggested that he would forward a copy of the Select Committee Alcohol report to Mr Craske and highlight those recommendations that had been resolved to date.

(15) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) a report on the current role of Health Visitors be submitted to a future meeting,
- (b) the comments and suggestions made by Members on the Healthy Weight for Kent Strategy and the request for clarification on the data from the PCTs referred to in paragraph 12 above be noted; and
- (c) the Strategy for Healthy Weight for Kent be approved.

16. Education Attainment Results of Looked After Children
(Item. B3)

(Mrs P Harris, Interim Virtual School Head and Mr P Brightwell were present for this item)

(1) The Committee considered a report that outlined the provisional attainment results expected for 2009, in relation to children looked after by Kent County Council in relation to the National Indicators 99 to 101. The report also included a revised action plan focussing on the key areas necessary to promote the educational attainment of Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers.

(2) Mrs Harris introduced the report explaining that the Virtual School Head was a new role, which acted as a champion for Looked After Children. Mrs Harris advised that she would be the interim Virtual School Head until a permanent appointment was made. This was an important role to ensure the most vulnerable children were looked after and their educational aspirations taken forward. She felt that Members, in their corporate parenting role, needed to be confident in their monitoring role and needed to ensure that they knew who the vulnerable children were so that those children received the best interventions. Currently the Advisory Service were monitoring 57 named children that were now in year 6 at Key Stage 2, and how they were performing at Key Stage 2 and 170 children in year 11 at Key Stage 4. Their attendance and attainment were being monitored and the individual programmes eg one to one tuition set for them were being tracked. There was a new indicator of 5 A* -C in mathematics it was predict that about 17 ½ % of the 170 children in year 11 would achieve the 5 A* – C.

(3) It was proposed that a report be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee in a year's time on the 170 children being tracked in year 11 whether they were in care or not, to demonstrate whether the programmes that had been put in place had any impact and if they had not what else could be done.

(4) Mr Ridings said that to put what Mrs Harris said into perspective with the total figures nationally where 51.6% of children in Kent who gained 5 A* -C at Key Stage 4 in English and Mathematics against 6.34% of Looked After Children. He felt that it was important for Members to do all they could as corporate parents to meet those childrens' needs. He felt that this was an excellent piece of work.

(5) In response to a question by Mr Bowles on how many of the children were from outside Kent or England and what percentage of those children was English a second language, Mrs Harris advised that out of the current year 11, 16% of the new arrivals had English as an additional language and 63 of those students came into care before the original targets were set either from out of the County or the Country. Mr Brightwell referred to the national indicators advising that they looked at the performance of the children at certain ages but did not look at the work that continued beyond statutory school age. The role of the Virtual School Head extended beyond the statutory school age until 24 years, approved by Kent's Corporate Parenting Group.

(6) Mr Vye welcomed the initiative as it ensured that the children concerned got the best education. He felt that school Governors should have access to the fair access protocols to ensure that the LAC get into the best school for them. There was a need to know whether there were schools that did not give those children the attention there should be. The virtual Governing Body should also be tracking the LAC to find those children that were under achieving. He advised that children in care were three times more likely to be cautioned or convicted of an offence and that he was keen to see that number going down. He questioned what happened to the children in a secure estate which may be outside our control? If LAC were contributing to that figure this initiative should affect that. Mr Brightwell advised that if the targets were right we would achieve the right outcomes. Research showed that the education achievements gained at 16 years was likely to show how successful children would be in the future.

(7) Mrs Harris advised that of the 170 LAC in the current year 11 that were being tracked:

- 23% were in special schools
- 29% had statements for special educational needs
- 10% were in alternative curriculum of which 7 were teenage mothers

The cohort had significant special educational needs. With the educational input it was hoped to get the measure and the teenage mothers back into the system with the right intervention.

(8) In response to questions by Dr Wadman, Mrs Harris explained that (i) the whole cohort was 170 students in year 11 and 57 students in year 6. (ii) The targets were set by looking at every Year 11 LAC and tracking their performance at the end of Key Stage 2, which was the same for all children and predicted the target on those that had achieved level 4 when they were 11 years old. For children in year 6 the achievements were based on their reading and writing at Key Stage 1. (iii) Referring to the action plan set out in the report as appendix 1, Mrs Harris advised that this was a draft action plan and the column headed 'On-going Monitoring' would be completed once the activities were agreed.

(9) In response to a question by Mrs Cole, Mr Brightwell explained that the monitoring of school attendance was under an old indicator, no longer in the national indicator set, PAF C24, as an indicator, our performance within that was approx 15% of LAC who missed more than 25 days schooling per year for a number of reasons eg exclusion, school refusers, ill health. This was the reason why there was recognition in the action plan as there was a need to know why they do not attend school, the aim was to have a matching needs and framework audit as a method of identifying different needs groups to ensure the services meet their needs.

(10) The Chairman felt that there was a need to celebrate the achievements of the LAC who were going onto University and suggested that they be sent a letter of congratulations and encouragement accompanied by a book token.

(11) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) a progress report be submitted to this Committee in a years time;
- (b) the comments and suggestions made by Members be noted; and
- (c) the predicted attainment results for National Indicators 99 and 101 and the revised action plan promoting the educational attainment of Looked After Children and Care Leavers be noted.

17. Kent Children's Trust (KCT) Commissioning and Delivery Review
(Item. B4)

(Report by Mrs Hohler, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Education and Mrs Wainwright, Director of Commissioning (Specialist Services))

(Mrs J Wainwright and Mrs J Ackroyd Kent Children's Trust Partnership Manager were present for this item)

(1) The Committee considered a report that set out the initial findings from the Kent Children's Trust (KCT) Commissioning and Delivery Review. Those findings would inform options for change to strengthen Kent's integrated commissioning and delivery arrangements to improve outcomes for children and young people in line with the Children and Young People's Plan.

(2) Mrs Wainwright introduced the report introducing Mrs Ackroyd to the Committee who she advised had carried out a lot of the ground work necessary to secure the report. Mrs Wainwright highlighted Appendix 2 of the report, which gave the sense of the whole report. She advised that Kent was currently reviewing the Kent Children's Trust arrangements, which other Local Authorities were also undertaking. Through the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Bill the Government was seeking to strengthen children's trust arrangements to deliver the ambitious programme. The Bill aimed to:

- extend the 'duty to cooperate' to Jobcentre plus and to all front line providers of education (including academies); and

- place Children's Trust Boards on a statutory basis with a joint responsibility to own and resource the Children and Young Peoples Plan.

(3) Mrs Ackroyd added that the Bill was making its way through Parliament and a draft of supporting guidance was expected on 13 November 2009. Mrs Wainwright then spoke on Appendix 1, which highlighted those elements that were going well and those areas that needed improvement. She explained that there was a close link with this review, the overall review of the Children, Families and Education Directorate structure and the review of the Local Children's Services Partnerships.

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

(5) In response to a question by Mr Vye, Mrs Wainwright gave examples of issues the joint commissioning could be used for, which included; Looked After Children (LAC) attainment, there was a need for full commitment of the Kent Children's Trust Partners whether it was through voluntary organisation or local organisations that provided positive activities for young people or the housing arrangements for young people leaving care.

(6) Mrs Wainwright said in response to a question by Mr Vye, that it was preferred to look at resources as human resources, skilled professionals, so that joint commissioning was through exchanges of commitment through partners rather than an exchange of money. If there was funding available this would be used for joint commissioning where the needs analysis indicates.

(7) In response to Mr Wells' concerns, Mrs Wainwright explained that it would be wrong to review the Children's Trust arrangements and not look at those of the Local Children's Services Partnerships (LCSPs). It had been found that there was an opportunity to look at different arrangements for the Partners including their attendance at meetings. District Councils as well as other Partners had questioned the amount of meetings they needed to attend with 23 LCSPs. They were also questioning whether 23 LCSPs was the right number and the time they were taken away from their host organisations. There was an opinion with our Partners that there should be fewer rather than more LCSPs that we had at present. There were thoughts around providing more flexible configuration to those aspects of the Partnerships that were associated with direct service delivery eg a Partnership Board covering a wider geographical area with delivery teams that covered specifically local and targeted areas so that there would be more flexibility.

(8) In response to a questions by Dr Wadman regarding where the commissioning authority rest and where the effective monitoring rest, Mrs Ackroyd advised that within the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Bill this had been rehearsed and there had been significant feedback from Local Authorities about needing clearer guidance about when Partnerships come together what the specific roles and responsibilities were. The direction and guidance that had been received from the Department of Children Schools and Families (DCSF) during presentations indicated that the responsibility for preparing and monitoring a partnership plan would be with the Children's Trust Board as a new statutory board under the new legislation but the delivery against that plan would be retained under the individual services ie those services delivered through

KCC eg children's social care would still be within the direct delivery remit of KCC, where it came together was in the agreement of the Local Children's Services Partnership Plan. The aim was to ensure that the services were done in a joined up way for the child and the family. The Children's Trust Executive one of the drivers behind the review was ensuring that Kent was in step with the guidance but maximising partnership arrangements to the best advantage of children and families and professional working in the services in Kent. Kent was not being lead by the guidance but ensuring that it was in step with guidance using it to ensure the best impact in Kent. With the services that KCC was responsible for there was no change to what the Overview and Scrutiny role that Members had. The Children's Trust would be where all of the interested partnerships come together. Mrs Wainwright added that there was an option, should any of the partner agencies significantly fail to deliver what they were responsible for within the Children's and Young Peoples Plan, for Kent to invoke the duty to cooperate as the lead partner.

(9) Mr Vye advised the Committee that he was a Member of the Kent Children's Trust and the Partners on the Trust were not use to getting involved in scrutiny. There were sub groups and the Executive would exercise their scrutiny. He felt that Kent had a duty to scrutinise what was done under Kent's name. He questioned whether Kent had the right to scrutinise what other partners did in line with the arrangements to scrutinise Kent Police and Kent Health Authorities. In response Mrs Ackroyd advised that the guidance may give a view on this. She added that the lead political accountability rested with the Cabinet Member and the lead professional accountability rested with the Managing Director for Children, Families and Education. She added that the inspection arrangements were beginning to catch up with the Partnership agenda and through the new Comprehensive Area Assessment there would be a judgement given about how Partners were fulfilling their duty to cooperate to improve outcomes.

(10) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the initial findings from the review set out in Appendix 1 of the report be noted;
- (b) the Commitment to a programme of development and change across all Partner Agencies of the Kent Children's Trust be noted; and
- (c) a full report on the review and final recommendations for commissioning arrangements be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

18. Children's Centres Review - Verbal Update
(Item. B5)

(Verbal Report by Mrs R Turner, Managing Director)

(Mrs R Turner was accompanied by Mrs H Robinson, Children's Centre Coordinator for Gravesham and Mrs K Bennett, Project Assistant, Central children's Centre Team to answer questions for this item)

(1) The Chairman welcomed Mrs Turner to the meeting and asked her to introduce the item. Mrs Turner advised that there were currently 72 Children's

Centres in Kent and their role included; to provide for all children and families, early education, child care, parent support and advice, a link to Job Centres Plus, the Centres were key to their communities and pulled in all the Partners of the Kent Children's Trust. The Children's Centres would act as a test to the Kent's Children's Trust arrangements. She felt that if the commissioning arrangements were right between all the various Partners there would be good services delivered. The National Programme of Children Centres was due to role out at the end March 2011. Rounds 1 and 2 Capital Programmes were already allocated and underway and currently the Directorate was dealing with Round 3 of the Review. A report on Round 3, due to timing, was to be submitted to the CFE: Resource and Infrastructure Policy Overview and Scrutiny Committee (POSC) on 19 November 2009.

(2) The Chairman referred to what she wished to cover in Item B6 on the agenda and suggested that Members of the Committee act as rapporteurs making visits to the Children's Centres across the County perhaps in pairs to help inform and fulfil the scrutiny role in the Review. Mrs Turner added that after the visits Members might wish to have a report to look at how the outcomes were recorded.

(3) Mrs Turner then introduced Mrs Robinson and Mrs Bennett to the Committee who could offer Members their views of working for the Children's Centres. Mrs Bennett commented that the Children's Centres would welcome visits from Members. She suggested that It would be difficult to give a Kent overview as all Children's Centres were different as some had evolved from old Sure Start programmes and were in a different place to others, visits would give Members a flavour of the many Centres.

(4) Mrs Bennett advised that the 'Together for Children' team who were from the Department of Children Schools and Families, who monitored the of the Children's Centres had to cover up to 800 children under 5 years old in one area, it was not expected that all parents could go to one site. In the rural areas the services had been taken out to parents by using Local Primary Schools, Health Centres, Village Halls and Community Centres. Kent had been doing well with this; three examples from Kent had been put on the 'Together for Children' website. Mrs Robinson added that the development of Children's Centres in rural areas had been a challenge. She gave the example of Gravesham, where a van had been purchased to get the services out to the communities, she suggested that this should not be building focused but about service delivery.

(5) Mr Smith felt that the work on Children's Centres should be attributed to one of the 3 Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Scrutiny Committees (CFE: POSCs) and the lead Committee should inform and involve the other two Committees. All three CFE: POSCs needed to inform one another of their agendas. He added that there was a connection with this agenda Item and agreed Select Committee on Extended Schools. In response Mrs Hohler advised that the Round 3 report was going to the Resources and Infrastructure POSC due to timing and the report was based on resource issues. She was keen for the CFE POSCs not to work in silos and this was overcome through the updates at the beginning of the meetings.

(6) Mrs Robinson advised that work was being carried out on pathfinding work on Extended Services around the County particularly where the Children's Centres were on school sites.

(7) RESOLVED that the Members comments and suggestions and the verbal report be noted.

19. Proposed Visits - Verbal
(Item. B6)

(Verbal report by Mrs A Allen, Chairman)

(1) RESOLVED that Mrs Allen had covered what she wanted to discuss in the previous Item B5 (refer to Minute (2)).

20. Select Committee - Update
(Item. C1)

(Report by Overview Scrutiny and Localism Manager)

(1) Members considered a report that outlined the progress with establishing a Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme 2009/2010.

(2) The Committee noted that the following topics would form part of the work programme for 2009/10

- Extended Schools
- Renewable Energy
- Dementia
- Educational Attainment of Pupils and Schools in Areas of High Deprivation

(3) The two Select Committees which were within the remit of the Children, Families and Education portfolio were Extended Schools (which would be a joint review with Communities POSC) and Education Attainment of Pupils in Areas of High Deprivation under the Learning and Development POSC.

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

(5) In response to a question by Mr Bowles, Mrs Turner advised that Educational Attainment Select Committee would the lead by the Learning and Development POSC. Mrs Hohler added that the report would be cross cutting and may involve input from this POSC too. The final report would go to a County Council meeting when all Members would have an input.

(6) Mr Smith questioned whether the heading 'Future Items' should be added to the agenda as a separate item. The Chairman advised that the heading could be added to future agendas.

(7) The Chairman advised on future items identified at the last meeting were; Autism, different levels of activities in Children's Social Services in East and West Kent and Research on Serious Case Reviews

(8) Mr Vye requested that consideration be given to adding the heading 'Urgent Items' to future agendas of all three CFE POSCs. Mrs Turner suggested

that the suggested forward work plan for all three CFE POSCs be pooled together so that they can be viewed in totality.

(9) RESOLVED that:

- (a) the comments and suggestion made by Members be noted; and
- (b) the topics to be included in the Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme for 2009/2010 as set out in paragraph (2) above, be noted.