

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee held in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 5 July 2007

PRESENT: Mr W Hayton (Chairman), Miss S Carey (substitute for Mr R Burgess), Mr A Crowther, Mr J Curwood, Mr M Dance, Mrs T Dean (substitute for Mr M Vye), Mr G Horne, Mr J Law, Mr W Newman, Mr M Northey, Mr E Rowbotham (substitute for Mr I Jones) and Mr R Tolputt

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES: Mr R Bristow, Mr S Parr (substitute for Dr D Wadman) and The Rev Canon J L Smith

TEACHER ADVISERS: Mr T Desmoyers-Davis, Mrs J Huckstep and Mr P Vokes.

APOLOGIES:

OBSERVERS: Dr T R Robinson (Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services), Mr J Simmonds (Cabinet Member for Education and School Improvement), Mrs A Allen (Lead Member for Education and School Improvement and Chairman of the Children's Champions Board).

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr G Badman, Managing Director, Children, Families and Education; Mrs M Hodges, Director Strategic Policy and Performance, Mrs L Miller, Policy Development Officer and Ms D Fitch, Assistant Democratic Services Manager (Policy Overview).

UNRESTRICTED ITEMS

45. Membership
(Item A1)

It was noted that Mr Vokes, NUT representative, would be retiring and would no longer be a member of this Committee. The Chairman thanked him for his service to this Committee and wished him well.

46. Election of Vice-Chairman
(Item A3)

Mr C Hart proposed and Mr W Newman seconded that Mrs C Angell be elected Vice Chairman.

Carried without a vote

47. Minutes
(Item A4)

Mr Badman announced that the Marlowe Academy was one of the RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architecture) National Award Winners for 2007.

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 April 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

48. Matters arising from the Minutes

RESOLVED that there would be an item at a future POC meeting on Child Poverty and Deprivation, with an opportunity for Members to discuss the issues

49. Minutes of the Meeting of the Children's Champions Board
(Item A6)

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the Children's Champions Board held on 23 May 2007 are correctly recorded and be signed by the Chairman.

50. Director's Update
(Item B1)

Mr Badman gave a presentation which included, an update on "Care Matters" and Services for Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). A copy of the slides was circulated to Members.

During the question and answer session the following was noted:-

- A copy of the LAC Pledge would be send to Members of this Committee.
- Arrangement would be made for Members to meet with LAC.
- Members were reassured that the good practise established by the Cluster Boards would not be lost when the Children's Trust was established.
- It was important that whenever KCC invited young people to attend a Member meeting, Members were supported so that they could engage with the young people appropriately.
- Cluster Chairmen and LEO's should be invited to attend their Local Board Meetings

Mr Badman emphasised that Members we able to ask him to include specific issues in his update via the agenda setting meeting.

RESOLVED That the oral update be noted.

51. KCC Annual Plan 2007/08

(Item B2 –Mr Chris Carter (Head of Planning And Performance) was present for this item)

(1) Mr Carter presented a report in relation to the KCC Annual Plan 2007/08 and in particular the performance indicators for this Committee's area of work. This was also an opportunity to seek Members' views on any changes that may be incorporated into the next Annual Plan.

(2) RESOLVED That the Annual Plan 2007-08 as it relates to the C, F & E POC be noted.

52. Children, Families and Education Annual Review 2006-07

(Item B3 –Mr Chris Carter (Head of Planning And Performance) was present for this item)

(1) Mr Carter introduced this report which invited the Policy Overview Committee to consider the draft of a CFE Annual Review Document circulated with the papers for the meeting. This was a new publication which reviews the achievements of the Children, Families and Education Directorate during 2006-07.

(2) Mr Badman and Mr Carter answered questions from Members on the document

(3) RESOLVED That

(1) the following comments made be noted:-

- Officers were congratulated on the result of the Annual Performance Assessment.
- It was noted that there were 610 "Healthy Schools" in Kent and that KCC were now ahead of a lot of other LA's.
- Where possible the media should be encouraged to try to make young people feel safe in their communities.
- It was confirmed that the draft Early Years Strategy would be coming to POC for comment.
- It was confirmed that the 4 pilot Children's Trusts were Shepway 1 & 2, one of the Maidstone Clusters and Tunbridge Wells.
- Page - B3:18 - it was confirmed that in relation to the interface between parents and the Children's Trust it was intended to secure parents views in considering the work of the Trust.
- Mr Bristow stated that he did not think that this document placed enough emphasis on the work done by SACRE in relation to eg RE and the Curriculum. The document should try to reflect what is being done in Kent regarding spiritual health and to look at outcomes as well as symptoms.

- There is no reference in the document to issue of young people and alcohol - the current select committee had heard evidence that young people received more information on the effects of drugs than on the effects of alcohol.
- Welcomed the new target for young people with mental health services and the increase in family liaison officers.
- The inclusion of quotes from the young people survey was commended and it was suggested that more of these should be used if possible.
- There is an issue re building resilience of young people and the issue of parents' focus on children's safety.

2) it be noted that the Committee would receive further information on the 14 – 19 Learner strategy and funding later in the year.

53. CPA Corporate Assessment

(Item B4 - –Mr Chris Carter (Head of Planning and Performance) was present for this item)

(1) Mr Carter presented a corporately produced report on KCC's corporate assessment inspection which was due in early 2008. This report sets out details of the corporate assessment process, work undertaken so far and actions that need to be taken to prepare KCC for this major element of the CPA framework.

(2) RESOLVED That:-

1) the report be noted.

2) there would be feedback on the Annual Performance Assessment at the November meeting of the POC.

54. Kent Children's Trust Parent Support Strategy

(Item B5 - Mrs Marisa White (Head of Extended Services) was present for this item)

(1) Mrs White presented a report which provided an update on the development of Kent Children's Trust Parent Support Strategy and set out the draft core principles for Members comments and views.

(2) Concern was expressed about the timing of the consultation with parents ie June – September. Mrs White acknowledged that this timescale was not ideal but explained that it was necessary in order to have a robust strategy in place by the end of the year.

(2) RESOLVED that :-

1) the process for consultation with parents be noted

2) the following comments on the strategy be noted :

- 15 principles especially numbers 6 & 7 were welcomed.
- Point 6 – rather than “does not prohibit access to services” more positive wording eg “open access to all services”.
- It was important that the strategy was in plain English.
- Consultation with church groups – it was agreed that this would be done more widely.
- There was little about spiritual and moral values and the important elements of personal relationships, Mrs White agreed that representatives of religious groups would be consulted to try to find a spiritual/moral principle wording that all endorse.

3) the strategy be submitted to the Committee in the autumn for comments

55. Publication of Information on Meeting Special Educational Needs (SEN) at all Stages of the SEN Code of Practice

(Item B6 - Mr Colin Feltham (Head Of Aen & Resources) - was present for this item)

(1) Mr Feltham introduced a report on the publication of information on meeting special education needs at all stages of the SEN code of practice. In the SEN code of practise Authority set out its plans and arrangements for meeting special educational needs. The Authority was required to do this in accordance with Statutory Instrument No 2218, 2001. He sought the Committees endorsement of the content of this document.

(2) RESOLVED that

1) the following comments on the document “Information on meeting special educational needs at all stages of the SEN Code of Practice” be noted :-

- Page 6:28 paragraph 4.4 – could there be an easy to understand explanation around “there is no low prior attainment funding for sixth form pupils”.
- Page 6:30 – paragraph 4:11 reassurance was sought that the Local Authority would continue to support an un-statemented child when they transferred from primary to secondary school – it was confirmed that support would not be taken away just because a child had transferred to a new school.
- B6:37 – paragraph 5.17 – pleased to see flexible placements.
- B6:120 – concern that if the school is responsible for determining which is the primary need this would be too prescriptive – reassurance was given that although Headteachers were responsible for determining the primary need for the termly census - the statement would set out all needs and how the school would meet them.
- It needed to be emphasised in the document that for any child with a statement, funding did not end until the academic year in which their 19 birthday occurred.

2) the document "Information on meeting special educational needs at all stages of the SEN Code of Practice" be endorsed for publication.

56. Equality Strategy

(Item B7 - Jacqui Ruddock (Policy And Statutory Compliance Officer) - was present for this item)

(1) Ms Ruddock presented a report on Kent County Council's Equality Strategy, which had been approved by Cabinet on 16 April 2007. The Strategy set out how the Council would promote equality and community cohesion and tackle unfair discrimination in Kent. Work would be ongoing over the next six months to undertake further engagement work on the Strategy with Members (through Policy Overview Committees), service users and employees, to explore issues highlighted through consultation, identify appropriate responses and take forward key actions. This work would inform a review of the Equality Strategy at the end of the year.

(4) RESOLVED That the Equality Strategy be noted.

57. Department for Education and Skills 14-19 Gateway Process

(Item B8 - Mr Don Garman (Joint Head of Schools Advisory Service) - was present for this item)

(1) Mr Garman introduced a report on the national 14-19 programme, which would culminate in an entitlement for all students from 2013. The programme would begin to be implemented in summer 2006 with the announcement of an opportunity for partnerships to apply to pilot the first five diploma lines in early December. All ten Kent local 14-19 forums had made applications for between two and four diploma lines, a total of thirty five. The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) had promised a rigorous assessment and eighteen Kent applications had been given the opportunity to pilot in either 2008 or 2009 providing conditions are met. The forums piloting from 2008 have received additional funding and are expected to participate in a wealth of training during 2007-2008.

(2) RESOLVED That the report be noted .

58. Report to Policy Overview Committee Regarding Consultation

(Item B9 - Mr Anthony Mort (Policy Manager) was present for this item)

(1) Mr Mort presented a report which informed Members of the consultations undertaken by the Children Families and Education Directorate in 2006/07. It also provided information on consultations planned for 2007/08.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

59. CFE Annual Complaints and Representation Report 2007

(Item B10 - - Mr Anthony Mort (Policy Manager) was present for this item)

(1) The Committee considered a report introduced by Mr Mort which gave information about the operation of the CFE complaints procedures for 2006/07.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

60. Children, Families and Education Directorate Risk Register

(Item B11 - Mr Chris Carter (Head of Planning and Performance) was present for this item)

(1) Mr Cater presented a report on the current Risk Register for Children Families and Education Directorate which was agreed by the Governance & Audit Committee on 7 March 2007.

(2) RESOLVED that the report be noted.

61. Select Committees - Update

(Item C1 –Dr I Craig (Director Operations) was present for this item))

(1) The Committee received a report which updated Members on the meeting of the Select Committee on Home to School Transport on progress with their recommendations one year after the report was considered at Cabinet. An update on the Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme was also submitted.

(1) RESOLVED that:-

(a) the Minutes from the meeting of the Select Committee on Home to School Transport held on 27 April 2007 and the continuing work being carried out by officers be noted.

(b) it be noted that an action plan from officers setting out how they proposed to take the recommendations from the Select Committee on PSHE/Children's Health forward will be submitted to the November meeting of the Policy Overview Committee and that, as normal practice, the Select Committee will be re-convened in April 2008 to receive a report detailing progress on each of the recommendations.

(c) the update on the new Select Committee Topic Review Programme be noted.