

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND EDUCATION POLICY OVERVIEW COMMITTEE

MINUTES of a meeting of the Children, Families and Education Policy Overview Committee held at the Marlowe Academy, Ramsgate on Thursday, 19 April 2007

PRESENT: Mr W A Hayton (Chairman), Ms C J Cribbon (Vice-Chairman), Mr R B Burgess, Miss S Carey (substitute for Ms B Simpson), Mr A D Crowther, Mr J Curwood, Mr M C Dance, Ms A Harrison (substitute for Mr W Newman), Mr C Hibberd, Mr G A Horne, Mr I T N Jones, Mr C J Law, Mr M J Northey, Mr R Tolputt, Mr R Truelove and Mr M J Vye

CHURCH REPRESENTATIVES: Mr R Bristow and Mr S Parr (substitute for Dr D A Wadman).

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

APOLOGIES: The Rev J L Smith and Mr R Straker.

OBSERVERS: Dr T R Robinson (Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services), Mr L Ridings (Lead 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

39. Mrs M E Featherstone

- (1) The Chairman announced the death on 18 April 2007 of Mrs M E Featherstone, County Councillor for Maidstone North East.
- (2) The Committee stood in silence as a mark of respect.

40. Minutes *(Item A2)*

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2007 are correctly recorded and that they be signed by the Chairman.

41. Minutes of the meeting of the Children's Champions Board
(Item A3)

(1) Mrs Allen presented the Minutes of the Children's Champions Board to the Committee and mentioned the sad loss of Mrs Featherstone who was Vice-Chairman of the Children's Champions Board.

(2) Mrs Allen drew attention to the presentation that the Children's Champions Board had received on E-Safety which had highlighted a number of very important issues. In relation to the issue of E-Safety, Mrs Olivier mentioned that she had been asked to join a Home Office Working Group on E-Safety. It was agreed that she could share the work that had been done on E-Safety in Kent with the Working Group.

RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the Minutes of the Meeting of the Children's Champions Board held on 14 March 2007 be noted;
- (b) an item on E-Safety be considered at a future meeting of the Policy Overview Committee.

42. Director's Update
(Item B1)

(1) Mr Badman gave a presentation which included:-

- an overview of child well being in rich countries (UNICEF 2007);
- the independent study into school leadership (DfES and PWC);
- effective school leadership.

(2) Mr Badman answered questions from Members on this presentation.

(3) RESOLVED that the oral update be noted.

43. The Value Money Review of School Clusters

(Item B2 – Dr I Craig, Director of Operations and Mrs Molly Norley, Directors Senior Project Manager were present for this item)

(1) Dr Craig presented a report which provided Members with the outcomes of the Value for Money Review of School Clusters. He pointed out the Value for Money Review report did not come from the Children's Families and Education Directorate but had been produced by Internal Audit in consultation with the External Auditors. This was the first of a series of Value for Money reports covering areas across the County Council. The report looked at Value for Money and risk in relation to the school clusters and circulated with the report was the Executive Summary by Internal Audit, their recommendations and the Directorate's responses to them.

(2) Officers then answer questions from Members on the Value for Money Review of School Clusters document.

(3) These questions included the way in which the clusters engaged with Local Members, and included the suggestion that Members could be invited as observers to their local Cluster Board meetings, in order to assist Members in championing their local cluster.

(4) RESOLVED that:-

- a) the outcomes of the Best Value Review of School Clusters, the action plan and the response from the Children, Families and Education Directorate be noted;
- b) the comments made by Members be noted;
- c) Internal Audit be informed that concern was expressed that non executive Members had not been involved in this process.
- d) consideration be given to inviting some Local Education Officers and Cluster Chairmen to attend a future meeting of this Committee to discuss Cluster arrangements and best practise.

44. DfES Consultation on Schools, Early Years and 14-16 Funding Proposals

(Item B3)

(Mr K Abbott, Director, Finance and Corporate Services, was present for this item)

(1) Mr Abbott submitted a report which updated Members on the recently published DfES consultation document on Schools, Early Years and 14-16 Funding.

(2) Comments and questions from Members were invited.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

- a) the latest proposals of the DfES in relation to funding to schools, early years and 14-16 be noted
- b) That the following comments by Members on the way forward be noted:-
 - General concerns were expressed in relation to the “claw back” of school reserves – it was felt that this proposal was a heavy handed way of dealing with this issue – it had the potential to be unfair on schools trying to save reserves for a specific purpose across financial years. A view was expressed that Headteachers/Governing Bodies should be trusted with their budgets.
 - The issue of splitting 14-16 from 16-19 year olds for funding purposes.
 - Members were pleased to see that some Children’s services under Every Child Matters were included within these proposals, but that this should not be to the detriment of school funding.

- Concern was expressed about the new proposals for the national distribution of DSG which may disadvantage Kent.

45. The Kent SACRE Annual Report (2005-2006)

(Item B4)

(Mr A Foster, Lead Curriculum Advisor and Ms Pamela Draycott, Cross Phase Advisor, RE and Citizenship were present for this item)

(1) Mr Foster presented a paper on the Annual Report 2005-2006 on the work of Kent Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education which informed Members of key developments in the field of religious education and collective worship, including the revised Kent Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

(2) Mr Foster and the working group from the Kent SACRE were thanked for their work to produce the "Kent Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education".

(3) RESOLVED that the following be noted:-

- the Kent SACRE Annual Report 2005-2006.
- the Kent SACRE Development Plan for 2005-07.
- the development of the new Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

46. Kent Local Authority Accessibility Strategy 2007-2010

(Item B5)

(Mr C Feltham, Head of Additional Educational Needs and Resources was present for this item)

(1) Mr Feltham presented a report which gave an overview of the Local Authority Accessibility Strategy 2007-2010 as required by Section 28D of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the SEN Code of Practice as it related to the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Members comments were requested.

(2) RESOLVED that:-

- a) That the development of the Strategy (as set out in appendix 2 to the report) be endorsed by the Policy Overview Committee prior to its submission to Cabinet for approval;
- b) That the following comments on the draft Accessibility Strategy be noted:-
 - the importance of accessibility to schools from the wider area ie dropped kerbs etc should be raised with the Highways Unit possibly via the Highways Advisory Board.
 - It should be made clear that young people did not need to access all of the school building in order to access the curriculum and it was important that they were not be taught separately from their peers.

47. Equalities and diversity across CFE and links with directorate and corporate priorities and the role of Race Equality Forum

(Item B6)

(Mr B Anderson, Director Children's Social Services and Ms J Ruddock, Policy and Statutory Compliance Office, were present for this item)

(1) Ms Ruddock presented a report on key developments which would ensure that the Directorate remained compliant with current and future legislative requirements and outlined the work of the Directorate's Equality and Diversity Strategy Group and the Race Equality Forum in CFE.

(2) Mr Vye, the Chairman of the Race Equality Forum gave an overview of the work of the Forum.

(3) Members asked a number of questions and requested that there should be an agreed mechanism to report back about equality and diversity in Children's, Families and Education on a regular basis.

(4) RESOLVED that the following be noted:-

- Work on the following strategies and frameworks to ensure the Directorate's compliance with current and future legislative requirements:-
 - Actions that contribute to KCC achieving level 5 of the Equality Standard for Local Government – including undertaking impact assessments
 - Directorate Equality and Diversity Group
 - Race Equality Forum
 - Conducting Impact Assessments
 - Contributing to KCC's Equality Strategy and Action plan
- The work of the Directorate's Equality and Diversity Strategy Group responsible for the monitoring the implementation of equality and diversity in policies and practices across CFE.
- The role of Race Equality Forum in contributing to the delivery of equality in schools and services within the Directorate.

48. Select Committee Update

(Item C1)

(1) The Committee received a report which updated them on the work of the PSHE/Children's Health Select Committee which had submitted its report to Cabinet on 16 April 2007. Ms Cribbon, Chair of the Select Committee presented the report and stated that the Select Committee had worked cross party and all Members had had their eyes opened about this subject. The work of the Select Committee would not have been possible without the support from their very able officers. The Select Committee report would be considered at County Council on 24 July 2007.

(2) The Committee were also updated on the current Select Committee Work Programme for Spring 2007 to Autumn 2007 as agreed by the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee and were informed that Consideration would be given to including

items for Autumn 2007 to Spring 2008 at the meeting of the Policy Overview Co-ordinating Committee in June 2007.

(3) RESOLVED that:-

- (a) the approval of the Select Committee report on PSHE/Children's Health on behalf of the Policy Overview Committee, by the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Liberal Democrat Spokesman be endorsed.
- (b) the update on the Select Committee Topic Review Work Programme be noted.