

MEMBERS' BRIEFING ON CHILDREN'S TRUST ARRANGEMENTS IN KENT
26 September and 9 October 2007

Main points and comments raised by Elected Members: -

- Which data would be used to inform the formation of the local Children Trust like structures (LCT), specifically would local area/cluster statistics be used or NFER statistics? Furthermore would each LCT be collecting similar statistics for their area?
- *Response confirmed that local data from clusters would be used together with multi-agency data supplied by partners. Graham Badman explained that Mosaic would allow CFE to have access to local information, as it operates at a sub-ward level. Additionally health and school performance data would be fed into the process.*
- Which data has the pathfinders used?
- *Response clarified that much data came from our partner agencies. The main difference now that the pathfinders had been set up was that this data was now being used in an integrated way and it could form the basis of collective decision-making.*
- Had the additional collaboration reduced the number of meetings and was there data to prove this?
- *Response confirmed that this data had yet to be collected.*
- What the Member role would be in LCT. Would the Members only be involved in Local Boards and was it sufficient?
- *Mr Wells responded by describing how LCTs would play a different role to the Kent Children's Trust (KCT). There is KCC political representation on the KCT, which has the responsibility of agreeing the county-wide Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). At a local level, Local Boards could scrutinise the LCTs. There is no decision yet as to local Member involvement.*
- If Local Boards are to be given the power to scrutinise LCTs, they must be given additional resources, as they would not be capable currently to fulfil this role?
- Are LCTs relevant to all parents and comments on the lack of reference to parents?
- *Response confirmed that LCTs include all children based against a model of need, and the views of young people and their parents are integral to arrangements at both a County and local level.*
- A few local Members had been invited to cluster boards now and it would be 'great' if Members could get involved in the activities of the area, not purely in a Scrutiny role.
- *Response: Chris Wells replied that some Members may look at Scrutiny from a particular perspective. He commented that if Scrutiny is properly engaged, it will be pro-active and forward thinking and influence decision making in a positive way.*
- No young person should fall through the net. Are partnership arrangements between Kent, Medway and East Sussex (and their respective agencies) sufficiently robust to ensure this would not happen?
- No young person will fall through the net as a result of the individual children's database, remarked Chris Wells. If a certain number of reports are inserted into this database, it automatically triggers an activity. Kent will have to look across its geographical boundaries; this is implicit to the arrangements.

- It was stated that it was the Conservatives who had turned Scrutiny into a reactive process. Scrutiny and overview must be seen as combined functions, but not enough thought had been given to providing Members with an Overview role.
- **Response:** *Chris Wells pointed out that there has been a concerted effort to change POC so there is more of an opportunity for Members to have overview and Scrutiny. CFE are glad to receive any feedback.*
- How many times had the Pathfinders been referred to CFE POC?
- **Response:** *There had been two oral updates and a written report was being presented at the next meeting.*
- Members were not elected to do the County Council's work at street-level, but to take a step back and make strategic decisions.
- **Response:** *Chris Wells said that Kent needed to be very careful of Member involvement. The Children's Act lays out very specific duties and the trail of responsibility leads directly back to Graham Badman and Chris Wells.*
- All Members had a responsibility for Looked After Children and that as elected Members, voters would hold them to account.
- **Response:** *Graham Badman explained that the responsibility to safeguard children fell to the Safeguarding Board not to the Children's Trust. The point of the LCTs was to form better preventative services.*
- **Response:** *Chris Wells reminded Members that there was the Children's Champion's Board to champion their needs.*
- Members were concerned over the lack of Member involvement. Members want more information; and there were concerns over the reliability of Local Boards to supply this. There is information that local Members will know and if they were involved from the outset there may be less of a need for Scrutiny.
- The Kent Children's Trust Board (KCTB) seemed similar to a Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and to the Kent Forum.
- Who was representing the churches on the KCTB, and who was the chair and how is the KCTB funded?
- **Response:** *The church was represented by the Bishop of Dover, as the Kent Partnership and SACRE had nominated him. The Law does not require that there must be a church representative.*
- LCTs should be local and specific to the locality; there was concern that Scrutiny would be coming from the centre.
- Where did the minutes, agendas and reports from the Pathfinders go, and should Members receive copies?
- Were the Police Authority aware of LCTs developments?
- **Response:** *There had been extraordinary co-operation from the Police Service. The Chief Constable had discharged responsibility for this area to the Chief Superintendent.*
- In the past, no Members knew of the Children's Consortium. It was requested that processes and systems (e.g. Local Board systems) were set up in advance of LCTs.
- **Response:** *Chris Wells stated that there were not just KCC Members to consider, but Members of the other agencies too e.g. the Fire Authority. Inclusion of Members from all*

these agencies would make the group too large and unwieldy. Children must get the services they require without a delay.

- There is a genuine worry that mechanisms are being taken away from local Members. There is the additional lack of resources for Local Boards, and without this resourcing there can be no Scrutiny.
- **Response:** *Graham Badman clarified that there were 2 issues: firstly the role of local government and secondly, the issue about Children's Trust - one is not linked especially to the other.*
- Who must be involved in governance arrangements according to the DCSF. Was it that district and borough councillors would be involved, but not KCC Councillors?
- **Response:** *Graham Badman explained that there is a framework of governance set by the law. Chief Officers (not politicians) from District Councils were represented on the County Trust Board.*
- A paper should be circulated with different governance models for the Members to choose from.
- Pathfinders must have some form of governance.
- **Response:** *There has been no change to governance arrangements yet, deciding governance was the next stage. This is a process of development.*
- Who sat on the Children's Trusts, so Members knew who to approach with their concerns?
- **Response:** *It was confirmed that a list of Members would be provided in the regular newsletter.*
- How would the LCTs would be funded?
- **Response:** *It was confirmed that Clusters manage staff devolved down by KCC and they will be matched by health staff.*
- It was suggested that there should be a report to POC in future to allow for further debate.
- Children's Champion Members should be involved at local level - elected by people.
- Children's Champions already established as sub group to POC could fulfil Scrutiny role.
- Agree Member role is one of Scrutiny not a professional.
- Issues around information - more information about what is happening locally was needed. Lack of information creates suspicion when we do not know what is going on.
- Local Board already trying to bring organisations together. Consortia always had a relationship with Local Boards.
- There have been some answers to help understanding how it will work. What pressures will be put on schools to flag up concerns about children?
- Role of Scrutiny helpful to move into Children's Health arena.
- Some did not participate before because they did not know about it. Concerns regarding enhancement of democracy and issues about what are communities - stretches further than trusts. Pity didn't have Pathfinders - who are they, where did they come from?
- **Response:** *Chris Wells stated that there are other pathfinders across the country that will feed back their experience.*