

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDREN'S SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 NOVEMBER 2010 AT COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Mark Griffiths, Cllr Russell Hawker, Mr J Hawkins, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Rev. A Kemp, Cllr Bill Moss, Cllr Helen Osborn, Mr N Owen, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Carole Soden (Chairman) and Dr M Thompson

Also Present:

Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Lionel Grundy OBE, Cllr Alan Macrae and Cllr Sheila Parker

118. Apologies and substitutions

Apologies were received from Cllr Peter Davis, Mrs Rosheen Ryan and Mr Chris Dark.

119. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed as a correct record with the following noted:

a) Minute 105 – Chairman's Announcements

Scrutiny of Budget and Performance

It was agreed that all future agendas would include a standing item providing an update on DCE's budget and performance status. Budget and performance monitoring reports to Cabinet would be circulated in hard copy to all members of the Committee when published. Members were asked to submit any specific questions on these reports in advance of the Committee meeting wherever possible.

b) Minute 107 – Coalition Proposals for Children's Services and Education

Cllr Mary Douglas expressed concern that the Committee had not received the new Family & Parenting Support Commissioning Strategy, which it had requested at its previous meeting . It was reported that,

following discussion with the Chairman, the Placements for LAC Task Group had received the Strategy instead, as this allowed scrutiny of the Strategy prior to final Cabinet approval. It was agreed that in future all Committee members would be notified if an item was to be considered by a Task Group instead of the full Committee.

c) Minute 108 – 16-19 Learning – Update on Transfer of Responsibility from LSC to LA

In September, the Committee agreed to submit a letter to the Secretary of State expressing the Committee's concerns regarding funding arrangements for further education. Cllr Hubbard confirmed that he had met with the Head of School Improvement and would be meeting again after the meeting to finalise the letter. This would be circulated to all Committee members for comment prior to despatch.

120. **Declarations of Interests**

There were no declarations of interest received.

121. **Chairman's Announcements**

1. Appointment of a representative to attend the Children & Young People's Trust Board

Cllr Osborn was unable to fulfil this role due to work commitments and therefore a replacement representative was required. discussion. It was agreed that Cllr Mary Douglas would be the appointed representative with Cllr Helen Osborn substituting when required.

2. Visit to Melksham Oak School

The Committee's visit to Melksham Oak School was scheduled for 2pm on Thursday 13 January with the following members confirming their interest in attending:

Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Jon Hubbard, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Russell Hawker, Mr John Hawkins and Mrs Alice Kemp.

3. Deferred Items

2 items were deferred from this meeting since the previous meeting:

i) Small Schools Strategy

As the national policy picture for small schools was still unclear an update would now be provided in January 2011.

ii) Transition Planning

The Committee was due to receive an update on the implementation of the Multi-Agency Transitions Protocol for transitioning young people from children's to adult services. This would now form part of the Corporate Review of services for disabled children and adults. It was agreed that the implications of this review, including for transition planning, be considered in March 2011.

5. Cllr Pip Ridout

This meeting would be the final meeting that Cllr Pip Ridout would be attending. However, Cllr Ridout had agreed to remain on the Further Education in the Salisbury Area Task Group.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Ridout for her contribution to the Committee.

122. **Public Participation**

There was no public participation.

123. **Coalition Changes - update report**

The Committee considered a report on the latest changes from Central Government relating to children's services and education. An executive summary of the recent Government white paper, 'The Importance of Teaching', was also circulated.

The Corporate Director for Children's Services introduced the update:

- Schools would now be more autonomous with many becoming academies. Local authorities would play a much more strategic role, supporting and encouraging academies and sponsors to work with under-performing schools.
- New measures were proposed regarding school performance, with the performance bar being raised. A secondary school will be considered to be 'under performing' if fewer than 35 per cent of pupils achieve 5 A*-C grade GCSEs including English and mathematics; an increase from the previous government's figure of 30 per cent. The thresholds for Key Stage 2 had also been increased.
- Teachers would be given new powers to search pupils within school premises and disciplinary powers 'beyond the school gate'.
- Schools were likely to become accountable for the children they excluded both in terms of the pupil's education and finance. The new system was

likely to result in the emergence of local authority and private sector-run pupil units.

- The national curriculum would be reviewed with the aim of reducing prescription and increasing school autonomy while refocusing on the core subject areas.
- Further data is awaited in relation to the school funding system including how the Pupil Premium would be administered. The number of central government grants would be greatly reduced and, of those that remain, few would be ring-fenced.
- The White Paper suggested that Scrutiny may in future have a role to play in scrutinising under-performing schools.

Following member questions, the following points were clarified:

- (a) For academies set up under the previous government's scheme, the local authority would continue to be the governing body when that academy had been sponsored by the local authority. It was likely that where academy schools were sponsored by Trusts, those Trusts would be responsible for appointing the governing body.
- (b) There were a significant number of learners dependant on the Education Maintenance Allowances (EMA) which was to be scrapped. Although the EMA was to be replaced with targeted support for those who face genuine financial barriers to participation, there was concern that this may impact on some learners' ability to qualify. Officers reported that strategic meeting had taken place last week where this had been discussed as a key issue and that there was more work planned on the potential implications. The Committee asked to be kept informed of developments.
- (c) DCE would be deleting approximately 60 posts as part of the current management review. In many cases, two deleted posts had been merged into one. Members requested that details of the final structure and number of deleted posts be circulated to members once known.
- (d) The 2010/11 Play Capital Funding allocation for Wiltshire had been reduced to £372k. To ensure a fair allocation, the criteria given to local authorities had been to ensure that those areas of highest deprivation were given priority.

Resolved:

- 1) To note the update.**

- 2) To receive a written update on the Department for Children & Education's staffing structure prior to the Committee's next meeting in January.
- 3) To closely monitor the local impact of removing the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for those in further education.

124. **Update on Implementation Of Wiltshire's Strategy to Improve the Emotional Well-Being and Mental Health of Children & Young People**

The Joint Service Director for Commissioning and Performance presented a update report on progress made towards the implementation of the Strategy and work undertaken by the Mental Health Trust.

Clarification was provided that the Strategy covered 4 tiers of support:

- Tier 1 - Schools. Promoting the service.
- Tier 2 – Primary Mental Health Service. Support for the early stages of service requirements. Managed by the local authority and known as 'Healthy Minds'.
- Tiers 3 and 4 – Specialist Services. Known as Specialism CAMHS and run by the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust. The majority of funding was provided by the Primary Care Trust (PCT).

Prior to the new contract being awarded to Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Mental Health Trust on 1 April 2010, there had been 3 specialist providers across the Wiltshire region. The rationale behind retendering was to secure a single provider that would provide good access and reduced waiting times. As the contract had been running for only 6 months, the Trust was now in the process of setting out its new service model, to include:

- A much closer relationship with Healthy Minds (Tier 2) to ensure a smoother pathway through the service.
- A reduction to the length of stay within in-patient units for severe mental health illness, which was currently above the national average of 65 to 70 days. This had already been reduced over the last 6 months but work continued to reduce further whilst ensuring care in the community was appropriate.
- No person under the age of 18 had been admitted to an adult ward.
- The new provider was clear about the involvement of young people as part of the revised service provision. The 'Off the Record' representative had commenced work in this area and would continue to ensure involvement.

- The Crisis and Outreach Service had been developed and was a key part of the new model. This was the service that bridged the gap between Tier 3 and Tier 4. The service provided a more intensive support and was particularly focused on looked after young people and young offenders.

Following member questions, the following points were clarified:

- (a) The 2010/11 Play Capital Funding allocation for Wiltshire had been reduced to £372k. To ensure a fair allocation, the criteria given to local authorities had been to ensure that those areas of highest deprivation were given priority.
- (b) Where possible the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was used. However, within Tier 2 referrals were often received from external sources (to include GPs, schools, etc) that did not allow for the CAF to be followed.
- (c) The Mental Health Trust were working to reduce the timeframe for referral to specialist services from 8 to 2 weeks. It was understood that central government did not class this as a key target although the Trust were still making steps to reduce the timeframe.
- (d) The financial implications for NHS Wiltshire once GPs took over the specialist CAMHS service from 2013 were not known. However, in the interim, the PCT had a duty to fulfil its 5-year contract to fund the service.
- (e) Clarification was provided that there were no plans to reduce the 10 children and young people's mental health beds currently shared by Wiltshire, Bath, North East Somerset and Swindon. The Trust had undertaken to ensure that where a bed was required, this would be found in an adolescent unit within Wiltshire.

Resolved:

- 1) To note that the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee were also to receive an update on this paper.**
- 2) To note the progress made towards implementation of the strategy and the new contract for specialist CAMHS.**

125. **Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision - Update on Implementation**

The Head of SEN presented an update report on how individual plans for young people affected by the Review of SEN Provision 2009/10 were being progressed. This following a request by the Rapid Scrutiny Exercise Group who considered the proposals for SEN Provision and made a number of recommendations. The Group had concerns regarding the transitioning of

young people from Specialist Learning Centres (SLCs) (now known as 'Resource Bases') to mainstream schools as a result of the Review's proposals.

Following member questions, the following points were clarified:

- (a) Meetings had been planned or already taken place with all affected Resource Bases and individual pupils. Plans would be in place for all pupils by the start of the next academic year. An update report would therefore be provided to the Committee in six months.
- (b) It was noted that a specialist assessment may need to take place for some children through the transitioning process but that an identified approach had already been agreed for the majority of children affected. The report confirmed that the process in place was working well in the majority of cases.
- (c) The proposal and cost implications for remodelling of the Resource Bases would be considered by the Schools Forum at its meeting in December would provide recommendations to Cabinet for further consideration thereafter. The funding model was based on the needs of children within Resource Bases today and therefore a formula was being sought for the future.

Resolved:

- 1) **To note the report on the progress made with establishing individual plans for each pupil affected by changes to Specialist Learning Centres (SLCs) as part of the Review of SEN Provision 2009/10.**
- 2) **To receive a further update report in 6 months on the implementation of the proposals relating to the Review of SEN Provision 2009/10.**

126. **Special Schools and Post-16 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Task Group**

At its meeting in January 2010, the Committee considered proposals for service development with regards to SEN provision in Specialist Learning Centres (SLCs), SEN support services and SEN provision in mainstream primary schools. The Committee agreed that a decision would be made in the Autumn on whether to establish a further Task Group to consider specifically special schools and post-16 SEN provision.

The Senior Scrutiny Officer presented a report containing suggestions for the terms of reference, methodology and timescale of the scrutiny review. It was noted that, in contrast to July's rapid scrutiny exercise looking at the initial SEN Review proposals, the long time-frame for this exercise would allow an in-depth

look at the issues and an opportunity for the Committee to undertake its policy development role.

Those members of the Committee interested in being a member of the Task Group were asked to advise the Senior Scrutiny.

Resolved:

To establish the Special Schools and Post-16 Special Educational Needs (SEN) Task Group, with the terms of reference described within the report.

127. **Task Group update**

An update on the work of the Task Groups was included with the Agenda.

The following further information was provided as follows:

Placements for Looked after Children (LAC)

The Chairman and Senior Scrutiny Officer was due to meet later today to recap on the Task Group's work so far and agree a future direction.

Clarification was sought on whether Area Boards were able to provide funding for services that had otherwise or previously been provided by the local authority. The Senior Scrutiny Officer would seek clarification following the meeting for circulation to all members of the Committee.

Further Education in the Salisbury Area

A meeting had been scheduled to take place on Thursday 2 December at Bourne Hill House in Salisbury.

The Parent Governor Representative (Primary School) and School Teacher Representative had expressed interest in taking part in the Task Group but had been informed that, due to a conflict of interest, they were not able to do so although it was noted that both parties could be called as witnesses to the Task Group to ensure the expertise they held was fully utilised.

Resolved:

To note the updates provided.

128. **Forward Work Programme**

Cllr Hawker requested that an item be added to a future agenda on the methodology used by the Council to calculate the demand for nursery places in Wiltshire (the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment).

As agreed under Minute 119, items on budget and performance monitoring were to be added as a standing item on future agendas. Hard copies of the Cabinet budget monitoring reports would be circulated to all Committee members when published.

Academies would be added as an agenda item for consideration in June 2011.

Resolved:

- 1) **To note the Forward Work Programme and Terms of Reference.**
- 2) **To add the additional items agreed by the Committee for future consideration.**

129. **Date of Next Meeting**

10.30am, 27 January 2011, Council Chamber, County Hall, Trowbridge.

130. **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items for consideration.

(Duration of meeting: 10.30 am - 12.40 pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Sharon Smith, of Democratic & Members' Services, direct line (01225) 718378, e-mail sharonl.smith@wiltshire.gov.uk

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