

CHILDRENS SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDRENS SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 28 JANUARY 2010 AT COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Mr P Colmer (Reserve), Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Mary Douglas, Mrs J Finney, Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Mark Griffiths, Cllr Russell Hawker, Hawkins, Cllr J Hubbard (Vice-Chair), Cllr Peter Hutton, King, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Bill Moss, Cllr Helen Osborn, Cllr Pip Ridout, Mrs R Ryan, Cllr Carole Soden (Chairman) and Thompson

Also Present:

Cllr Lionel Grundy and Cllr Alan Macrae

36. **Apologies and substitutions**

Apologies were received from Mr Di Dale, Cllr Paul Darby and Mr Neil Owen. Cllr Peter Colmer substituted for Cllr Paul Darby.

37. **Chairman's Announcements**

- (a) Although unable to attend the meeting, a welcome was given to Mr Chris Dark, Head of Matravers School, who replaced Mr Gerard McMahon as the Committee's Secondary Schools Headteachers Representative.
- (b) Welcome to Mrs Alice Kemp who was elected as this Committee's Special Educational Needs (SEN) Parent Governor Representative following a ballot of parent governors in Wiltshire. Mrs Kemp is a parent governor of St Nicholas Special School in Chippenham. She will also have membership of the Schools Forum and the Admissions Forum.
- (c) Thank you to all who attended the 13-19 Strategy Seminar given by Julie Cathcart and Mike Perry in December.

On 1 April 2010, statutory duty for the planning and commissioning of 16-19 learning will pass from the Learning and Skills Council to the Local Authority as part of legislative changes. This is a huge area of work and Julie Cathcart has agreed to bring a report to March's meeting, providing

an overview of what the Department is doing in preparation for taking on this new function.

- (d) Due to the length of the agenda for this meeting, the following non-urgent items were deferred until the next meeting in March:

Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children Board

Update on the Multi-Agency Transitions Protocol

- (e) At the November meeting an overview of pupil performance was considered. Some revised performance marks were not available at the meeting and members requested to receive these figures at the meeting today.

As there has been little change other than some upward adjustment to the Key Stage 4 and Post-16 results rather than a full report the updated figures have been circulated. A copy can be found attached to these minutes.

- (f) Henry Powell, Senior Scrutiny Officer supporting the Children's Services Select Committee, is currently on leave. Ashley Matthews will be supporting us for this meeting.
- (g) We were joined at the last meeting by members of the Trowbridge Youth Parliament. They have forwarded on some further questions for members. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman will co-ordinate a response and a copy of the questions will be circulated to all members of the Committee.
- (h) At its meeting on 14 January, the Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee considered some proposed changes to the arrangements for Burns Care for Children and Young People in Wiltshire. Cllr Pip Ridout provided a brief update as follows:

The Committee considered the proposals to rationalise Burn Care for Adults and Children for Wiltshire people, introduced by Jeff James, Chief Executive NHS Wiltshire.

In summary, the proposals are that Salisbury will provide burns care for all residents (adults and children) except for the very severe burns where care will be provided at Frenchay for children, and in Swansea for adults.

Burn care for children is quite different to that for adults and so the services are allocated separately. The numbers of Wiltshire residents experiencing severe burns is very low (less than 10 adults and less than 5 children in any three year period) so the vast majority of care will continue to be provided within Wiltshire.

The Committee was satisfied with the proposals made and supported the plan for the designation process to be completed by March 2010, allowing all four services to be fully functioning in their roles by April 2010.

- (i) The Special Joint Overview and Scrutiny meeting to consider and comment on the Cabinet's budget proposals will take place on 16 February at 10.30am in the Council Chamber, Trowbridge. Councillors are encouraged to attend where possible.

38. **Declarations of Interests**

Mr John Hawkins declared a prejudicial interest regarding item 8 as Governor of one of the 3 schools referred to in the item.

Cllr Jon Hubbard declared a prejudicial interest regarding item 12 as the Chairman of the Melksham Local Collaborative Partnerships Steering Group.

39. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 12 November 2009 were signed and approved as a correct record.

40. **Public Participation**

None.

41. **Ofsted Children's Services Rating 2009**

A report providing details on the Ofsted assessment of the performance of children's services within Wiltshire was presented to the Committee for note and comment as appropriate.

Carolyn Godfrey - Corporate Director for Children and Education, Stephanie Denovan - Service Director Schools and Learning and Sharon Davis – Service Director Children and Families attended the meeting to answer any questions arising.

Wiltshire had received a 'Performs well' rating, improving on last year's rating of 'Adequate'. Clarification was provided that the data contained within the performance profile differed from previous years, with an increased emphasis on key data groups including inspected and regulated services (e.g. childminders and pre-schools). It was also highlighted that some provisions under inspection were not under the control of the local authority.

Ensuing discussion included:

- Primary schools performance at 58% was below the national average. The Service Director for Schools and Learning clarified that this percentage was based on those schools already within the 'good or better' category and did not include schools under the 'satisfactory' category, reiterating that the calculations were based on the new Ofsted profile.
- Leadership and management and the quality of teaching were being developed within primary schools.
- 4 primary schools in Wiltshire were deemed to be 'inadequate' and as a result were currently in special measures.
- A significant gap existed regarding attainment levels for children in receipt of free school meals and those not. The gap was narrowing within the early years category. A report providing further details on attainment would be circulated to all members of the Committee by the Service Director for Schools and Learning.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the report.**
- 2. To congratulate all staff working with children and young people in Wiltshire on receiving a rate of 'Performs Well' from Ofsted following its assessment of Children's Services in Wiltshire.**
- 3. To request a report to this Committee's June meeting, explaining Ofsted's comment that a high proportion of primary schools in Wiltshire are no better than satisfactory and a small number are inadequate, and the Department's plans for making improvements in this area.**

42. Laverstock Academy Update

A written update on progress with the Laverstock Academy was provided by Nick Glass, Head of Secondary School Improvement. Stephanie Denovan, Service Director for Schools and Learning attended to answer any questions arising.

Ensuing discussion included:

- The Laverstock Academy had been deleted from the Department for Children, Schools and Families' (DCSF) list of projects, as the Catholic Sponsor did not sign the EOI document due to it not meeting the education trust's requirements. It was therefore suggested that the Committee disband the Laverstock Academy Task Group established in July 2009.

- St Josephs were now exploring the possibility of forming a trust arrangement with another catholic school or schools.
- A meeting had taken place between governors and headteachers from Wyvern College and St Edmunds School to explore the feasibility of a joint federation between the two schools. The schools have differing educational focuses; the former being a technology college and the latter specialising in sports.
- Funding for schools in the Laverstock area other than through an Academy Grant was unlikely because overall the schools' performance was good. It was acknowledged that the standard of some of the buildings on the current site was poor.
- As the Academy was not now proceeding, an alternative site for the proposed 6th form should be investigated, perhaps through collaboration with Wiltshire College.
- The Committee could establish a new task group focusing on how transformational teaching could be applied to the three Laverstock schools.

Resolved:

- 1. To note that the necessary signatures for the Laverstock Academy Expression of Interest (EOI) were not received and therefore the Academy project will not proceed.**
- 2. To disband the Laverstock Academy Task Group established in July 2009.**
- 3. To receive an update report in March 2010 before any decision is made regarding establishing a Task Group to look at this issue.**

43. Local Collaborative Partnerships (LCP) Update

A report providing an update on the development of the Local Collaborative Partnerships (LCPs) and Extended Services was submitted by Mark Brotherton. Stephanie Denovan, Service Director for Schools and Learning, answered questions arising.

The Committee received an update report on LCPs at its previous meeting, which was attended by members of the Trowbridge Children's Parliament. This further update was requested to consider how future funding of the scheme would be achieved and to consider the establishment of a possible LCP Task Group.

Ensuing discussion included:

- There was limited government funding available for the scheme and the existing funding from Central Government would cease in 2011.
- Whether it would be premature to establish a task group to look at this issue before funding arrangements beyond 2011 are finalised.
- Confusion existed on the status of the Local Collaborative Partnership Strategy Group. Cllr Helen Osborn was the appointed Committee representative but had still to be invited to any meetings.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the update on the progress of Local Collaborative Partnerships and Extended Services in Wiltshire.**
- 2. That Cllr Jon Hubbard, Mark Brotherton, Head of Local Collaborative Partnerships (LCPs) and Stephanie Denovan, Service Director for Schools and Learning, would meet outside the meeting to discuss a way forward, with a further report to be submitted at the next Committee meeting in March 2010.**
- 3. That Cllr Helen Osborn to liaise with Mark Brotherton, Head of Local Collaborative Partnerships (LCPs), to ascertain the status of the Local Collaborative Partnership Strategy Group.**

44. Review of Special Educational Needs (SEN) Provision

A report from the Corporate Director for Children and Education was presented by Trevor Daniels, Head of Special Educational Needs, containing proposals for SEN service development to mainstream primary schools, specialist learning centres, special schools and SEN support services for comment by the Committee prior to public consultation.

The introduction included highlighting areas of progress within the SEN service, i.e. how efficient the authority's central assessment unit was within Wiltshire (ranked joint first in the country) and how secondary schools were working with children with special educational needs in their area. Clarification was provided that the proposals focused on the issues around provision of services within specialist learning centres, local authority SEN support services and within primary schools.

Further discussion included:

- Funding had been secured for an extension to Exeter House in Salisbury to increase its capacity.

- How provision was being allocated across the county and whether this was being done efficiently.
- Specialist Learning Centres provided an important service for a small proportion of children, and the review would look at how to use them most efficiently.
- Placements catering for speech and language and placements catering for Autism were utilised to a high degree.
- Better collaboration between specialist and mainstream schools was required.
- The Consultation Document will be sent to relevant parents/carers, various local agencies, parent groups and all Wiltshire schools in February, with the consultation running until May 2010. Changes requiring statutory notices will then be submitted for further public consultation. A more substantial review of SEN services would begin in the Autumn.

The Chairman thanked those in attendance for their contributions and suggested that the establishment of a task group to consider changes to SEN services be deferred until Autumn. Any member of the Committee wishing to be part of the Task Group should contact Ashley Matthews following the meeting.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the report.**
- 2. That the Committee would receive a report in June 2010 providing the results of the consultation on the proposed changes to SEN services.**
- 3. That a decision would be made in the Autumn regarding the establishment of a task group to look at SEN services, following receipt of an update report.**

45. Integrated Working in Wiltshire

A report providing an update on progress made in Wiltshire to implement the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Lead Professional was presented to the Committee.

Rebecca Barson, Area Services Manager, and Sharon Davies, Service Director, attended to answer any questions arising from the report.

Ensuing discussion included:

- Following the Joint Area Review (JAR) Action Plan of 2009, a target was set to increase CAF activity by 500%. This target was exceeded.
- An integrated training and work programme had been developed to help professionals from all agencies understand the CAF and to encourage information-sharing amongst them.
- The positive impact of the CAF was difficult to see and work was being done on how to remedy this.
- For parents of disabled children, the CAF will be working within the 'Aiming High' agenda.
- The CAF Newsletter provided within Appendix 2 of the report had been positively received across Wiltshire.
- There was an acknowledgement that short breaks were currently more applicable for children and young people with SEN/LDD attending mainstream schools. Meetings were now being arranged with specialist schools to understand how take-up of short breaks could be increased for their pupils.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the progress made in respect of implementing and embedding use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and Lead Professional in Wiltshire.**
- 2. To receive a report updating the Committee on the implementation and use of the CAF in January 2011.**

46. Placements Budgets - Benchmarking of Expenditure

A report reviewing the national benchmarking comparisons for expenditure on placements for Looked After Children (LAC) was presented by Liz Williams, Head of DCE Finance.

The Committee was asked to note the report and the enclosed data, which would inform the placement commissioning strategy to be presented at the Committee's March 2010 meeting.

Ensuing discussion included:

- A major part of the review of how placements are provided for LAC included looking how Wiltshire's current provision compares with other authorities.

- Whilst the number of nights care provided increased by approximately 24% between 2002/03 and 2008/09, expenditure over the same period increased by 161%.
- 24% of looked after children within Wiltshire were placed with external carers against the average authority figure of 11%. This was partly due to previously in-house foster carers being attracted by private foster care agencies within Wiltshire.
- In 2007/08, Wiltshire spent £1.8 million on Family Support Services. If Wiltshire had spent at the same level as similar authorities it would have been spending £4.2 million. 'Prevention' should therefore be a focus within the report coming to the Committee's March meeting.

Resolved:

To note the data included in the report, which will inform the Placement Commissioning Strategy due to be presented to the Committee in March 2010.

47. Primary Behaviour Support Service

The Committee received a report from the Corporate Director for Children and Education on the continuing development of the Primary Behaviour Support Service and its impact on outcomes for children and young people in Wiltshire. Mary Smith, Strategic Manager Primary Behaviour Support, attended to answer questions arising.

An initial report was submitted to the Committee in November 2008, where members supported the development of the service as an effective way to tackle behavioural problems at an early age.

Subsequently, the Schools Forum declined the funding request of £303k to implement the service and instead commissioned a sub-group to develop an alternative method of funding the service.

Ensuing discussion included:

- One clear measure of the impact of the service was exclusion activity; since the commencement of the Primary Behaviour Support Service, permanent exclusion figures from primary schools had reduced, while fixed term exclusions had increased slightly.
- Members considered the content of the report useful but suggested that further information demonstrating the anticipated savings the service should provide would also have been helpful. A member clarified that the cost of an excluded child is around £12-16k per year, or around £14-20k for a child with Special Educational Needs.

- A paper on 'Early Intervention and Prevention' was highlighted as useful reading material to understanding the benefits of prevention.
- Clarification that a grant of £67k had been received by the department to assist in the development of the Service.
- The Committee welcomed the work done by the Behaviour Support team, recognising that the service represented good value for money and that the 'invest to save' approach was to be encouraged.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the report.**
- 2. To receive an update report on the Primary Behaviour Support Service in January 2011.**

48. Youth Services in Wiltshire

The item was included on the Agenda following a request from Cllr Helen Osborn for a scrutiny exercise into the provision of Youth Services across the County. This followed the circulation of the Members' Briefing Note detailing changes to Youth Services on 7 December 2009, subsequently amended and re-circulated on 16 December 2009. The Briefing Note explained the changes to Youth Worker provision across the County.

David Whewell, Head of Youth Work, attended the meeting to answer questions arising.

Ensuing discussion included:

- The amended Briefing Note circulated on 16 December quoted different figures for youth worker provision to the version released on 7 December 2009. The first note used a previous year's budget allocation, and for a couple of community areas the formula to calculate full-time staffing allocation was inaccurate. David Whewell apologised for any confusion this may have caused.
- The changes were intended to ensure a fair allocation of youth workers across the county based on need. There would be both winners and losers; while some areas would see a reduction of funding other areas would see an increase. Youth worker provision has not reduced across the county overall, just apportioned differently.
- Any lost funding could perhaps be sourced through other means, i.e. through area boards.

- There was general agreement with the need for equitable distribution of youth workers, but some members expressed concern that they were not consulted prior to the changes being decided.
- David Whewell and his team reported that they had consulted with the Cabinet Member for Schools, Children and Families and Youth, and Portfolio Holder for Schools. Following this there was agreement that the approach being taken was the correct way to proceed. The Cabinet Member acknowledged the need for proper consultation and noted Members' comments on the decision making process in this case. An invitation had been made to all Area Boards by the Youth team to attend meetings and discuss the changes.
- Levels of youth worker provision were linked to problems with anti-social behaviour amongst young people. Several areas that were poorly serviced in the past had seen a reduction in anti-social behaviour following the appointment of youth workers in their area.
- The Children and Young People's Representative emphasised the importance of the Youth Service, noting how it could provide opportunities for young people to gain qualifications.
- It was noted that Youth Service funding would be reviewed every 3 years.

Resolved:

That an update report will be presented to the Committee in September 2010.

49. **Major Contracts Task Group Update**

A written update on the Major Contracts Task Group was presented to the Committee. This followed a review on the White Horse Education Partnership who were responsible for school accommodation at three North Wiltshire Schools.

Cllr Bill Moss, Chairman of the Task Group, concluded that the service provided by White Horse Education Partnership was considered to be of a good standard.

Resolved:

To note the update.

50. **Forward Work Programme**

The Committee was asked to note the re-designed Forward Work Programme, including the changes discussed under Chairman's Announcements.

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme.

51. **Urgent Items**

None.

52. **Date of Next Meeting**

10.30am, 18 March 2010 at County Hall, Trowbridge.

(Duration of meeting: 10:30am – 1:30pm)

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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