

CHILDRENS SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE CHILDRENS SERVICES SELECT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 MARCH 2010 AT COUNCIL CHAMBERS, COUNTY HALL, TROWBRIDGE.

Present:

Cllr Paul Darby, Cllr Andrew Davis, Cllr Peter Fuller, Cllr Russell Hawker, Cllr Jon Hubbard (Vice-Chairman), Cllr Peter Hutton, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Bill Moss, Cllr Helen Osborn, Cllr Pip Ridout, Cllr Carole Soden (Chairman), Mr Chris Dark, Mr John Hawkins, Mrs Alice Kemp, Mr Chris King, Mr Neil Owen and Mrs Rosheen Ryan

Also Present:

Cllr Richard Clewer, Cllr Alan Macrae and Cllr Sheila Parker

53. **Apologies and substitutions**

Apologies were received from Cllr Mary Douglas, Cllr Mark Griffiths, Mrs Judith Finney, Mr Mike Thompson and Mrs Di Dale.

Lionel Grundy, Cabinet Member for Children's Services, was also unable to attend the meeting. Cllr Richard Clewer, Portfolio Holder for Youth Skills, and Cllr Sheila Parker, Portfolio Holder for Vulnerable Children attended in his place.

54. **Chairman's Announcements**

- (a) Welcome to the pupils from Winsley Primary School. The pupils had some questions for members which would be raised later in the meeting.
- (b) The Committee's next meeting, previously scheduled for Thursday 10 June, had been re-scheduled to take place on Tuesday 8 June 2010. Apologies were given for any inconvenience this may have caused.
- (c) Elections for the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth (WAY) and the UK Youth Parliament took place in February. Over 32,000 votes were cast in Wiltshire, representing more than 60% of all young people in the county.

Six Wiltshire members were elected to the UK Youth Parliament and nine to the Wiltshire Assembly of Youth.

Chris King, the Committee's young people's representative, still had one year remaining of his three year term for WAY and had chosen not to stand for the UK Youth Parliament this year due to exams coming up in the summer.

- (d) At the Committee's January meeting members received an update on progress with Local Collaborative Partnerships (LCP) and some members expressed concern regarding their future funding after Central Government funding ceased in 2011.

The Head of LCPs, Mark Brotherton, had extended the invitation to advisory group meetings to all members of this committee to allow continual input from scrutiny and hopefully allay some members' concerns over future funding.

The Group's next meeting was yet to be scheduled but Henry Powell would circulate details once known.

Following Chairman's Announcements, questions were received from the Winsley School pupils. A copy of the questions and answers can be found appended to these minutes. Pupils were encouraged to send any further questions to the committee who would endeavour to answer them. The Chairman thanked the pupils for attending the meeting.

55. **Declarations of Interests**

Cllr Jon Hubbard declared a personal interest in item 8 (13-19 Strategy – Update on the Arrangements for Transfer of Responsibility from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to the Local Authority from 2010) as an employee of Wiltshire College, which would be commissioned by the council once it took over responsibility.

56. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The following amendments to the draft minutes of the meeting of 28 January were noted:

(a) Mrs Alice Kemp attended the meeting.

(b) Minute 44 (Review of SEN Provision) – the report which updated the Committee on the results of the SEN consultation was to be submitted to the Committee in July and not June.

With these amendments, the minutes of the previous meeting were approved and signed as a correct record.

57. **Public Participation**

None.

58. **Laverstock Schools Update**

Nick Glass, Head of Secondary and Special School Improvement, provided a verbal update on Wyvern College, St Edmund's Girls School and St Joseph's Catholic School in Laverstock.

- (a) It was clarified that the original proposal for an academy in Laverstock was based on the low attainment in 2007 at St Joseph's Catholic School which allowed the LA to bid for monies that were available. The generally poor condition of the school buildings at the site and the sustainable future of small schools was a contributory factor in pursuing an academy. All three schools have shown an improvement in pupil performance since 2007.
- (b) The chairs of governors and headteachers of Wyvern College and St Edmunds had recently attended a meeting with the council and a consultant from the National College of School Leadership. The two governing bodies agreed to form a joint committee to coordinate further collaboration between the two schools and to further develop links with St Joseph's Catholic School. It was clarified that at this stage they were not discussing amalgamation or federation.
- (c) It was confirmed that St Josephs Catholic School and St Augustine's School in Trowbridge deliberating on forming a catholic trust, which would build upon their history of collaboration.
- (d) Members expressed concern that collaborative working between the Laverstock schools, though a positive sign, would not address the condition of the school buildings. It was agreed that a site visit would be arranged to aid members' understanding of this issue.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the update provided.**
- 2. That a visit to the Laverstock school sites would be arranged for members.**

59. **Placements for Looked After Children (LAC) Commissioning Strategy - Update**

At its previous meeting the committee received national benchmarking comparisons for local authorities' expenditure on placements for LAC. This highlighted that the budget for LAC placements in Wiltshire had been an area of overspend in previous years and detailed some of the factors that had influenced this.

Sharon Davies, Service Director for Children and Families, attended and reported that the working draft of the new LAC Placements Commissioning Strategy, which was expected for this meeting, required further work before being ready for public scrutiny. The Children and Young People's Trust Board was due to approve the final version of the Strategy prior to the committee's next meeting scheduled for 8 June 2010. It was therefore proposed that an ad hoc task group be established to scrutinise the draft Strategy prior and provide recommendations to the Trust.

It was suggested that those committee members also on the Corporate Parenting Panel may have a particular interest in taking part in this task group. Any members interested in taking part were asked to contact the Senior Scrutiny Officer.

Resolved:

To establish a task group to scrutinise the draft Placements for Looked After Children (LAC) Commissioning Strategy and make recommendations to the Children's Trust Board and the executive as appropriate.

60. **13 - 19 Strategy - Update on the Arrangements for Transfer of Responsibility from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) to the Local Authority from 2010**

Julie Cathcart, Head of School Improvement, presented a report on the council's readiness to take on its new strategic responsibilities for commissioning education and training for 16-19 year olds (16-25 for Learners with Learning Difficulties and Disabilities). This responsibility would transfer from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) on 1 April 2010 and the transfer formed part of the Government's 14-19 Reform Programme, which also included an increase in the age of entitlement to training or education to 17 in 2013 and 18 in 2015.

Ensuing discussion included:

- (a) Members expressed concern that only 2.6 full time equivalent (FTE) staff would now transfer from the LSC, when it was initially suggested

that 8 staff were required. It was clarified that an extra grant would be received to fund further officer time, and existing teams in the department would be reorganised to provide extra resource. The final team would consist of 8 staff working on the 14-19 age group with additional members of staff helping out when required.

- (b) Staff within the new 14 -19 team will focus on learners with learning difficulties and disability. In time the council will receive block funding to secure placements for learners with learning difficulties and disabilities. Currently this responsibility rests with the Young Peoples Learning Agency. Wiltshire Council is working with other local authorities and the Young People's Learning Agency to discuss medium and long term aspirations regarding local provision and the cost implications of independent specialist providers. Early indications suggests that this could present significant cost pressures in the future.
- (c) Work had been identified and commenced on upgrading Exeter House School, a local provision for those with learning disabilities in Salisbury. Provision in the school includes pre-16 learners, although this will provide some improved facilities for post-16 learners.
- (d) There was the potential for the Youth Service to become a provider funded for the delivery of qualifications for particular groups of young people. If the service did move forward in this way they would be required to make their provision in line with the requirements placed on all learning providers.

Resolved:

- 1. To thank officers for the report.**
- 2. To note the work done to ensure the Council is ready to take on its new strategic responsibilities for learning and skills, including the planning and commissioning of education and training for 16-19 year olds from April 2010.**
- 3. To receive an update report in September 2010 and the Commissioning Plan for 2011-12 in January 2011.**

61. Transition Planning - Progress made since Children's Services Scrutiny Committee 7 May 2009

Susan Tanner, Strategy Manager for Aiming High for Disabled Children, and Susan Tomes, Programme Lead for Transitions, presented a report on the progress made with transitioning young people from children's to adult services. The committee last received a report on transitions in May 2009 when it

considered a draft version of the Multi-Agency Transitions Protocol for transitioning young people from children's to adult services.

The Multi Agency Transition Protocol had been amended to widen its scope following recommendations by members and is now in the public domain. The subsequent focus of the Transition Partnership Board has been to develop a plan to implement the Protocol over the next 3 years. The Board has also established multi-agency transition panels to identify young people who are likely to require an adult social care service and to monitor their transition up to the age of 25 if required. The panels provide advance information to adult care commissioners about likely budget implications and service requirements.

Ensuing discussion included:

- (a) Helen Sanderson (who are currently advising the Department Health on person centred approaches) have been appointed to develop a culture of person centred thinking and planning amongst professionals in the transition process at a cost of £10,000. Charteris, experts in change management, have been appointed by Adult Services to develop a new operational model of delivering transitions in Wiltshire.
- (b) Following member concern that parents must fully understand the transitions process, it was reported that a Transitions Fair would be held on 25 May and a Transitions newsletter would be sent to all schools. A Transitions handbook was also under development.

Resolved:

- 1. To note the progress made by the Transition Partnership Board.**
- 2. To note the work to improve the transition of young people to adult social care.**
- 3. To receive an update on Transition Planning in September 2010.**

62. Annual Report of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB)

Sarah Webb, Head of Safeguarding, introduced the Annual Report 2009/10 and Annual Business Plan 2010/11 of the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB). The LSCB is the multi-agency strategic Board responsible for co-ordinating policies, training and all multi-agency safeguarding systems and the effectiveness of safeguarding children work. Copies of the LSCB Safe Parenting Handbook were also circulated.

Ensuing discussion included:

- (a) The Safe Parenting Handbook was being distributed through health visitors and to first year pupils in primary and secondary schools. A suggestion was made that a small article could be placed in the Wiltshire Magazine circulated to all residents to raise awareness further.
- (b) It was clarified that the Cabinet Member for Children's Services was a non-voting member of the Safeguarding Children's Board. In addition, an LSCB sub-group, Practice Area Fora, meets twice annually in an open group meeting. Members were welcome to attend these additional sessions held in Chippenham, Devizes, Trowbridge and Salisbury.
- (c) Links were being made between the Board and the Local Safeguarding Adults Board to encourage collaboration where appropriate.

Resolved:

- 1. To thank officers for the report and its contents.**
- 2. To receive details of the following year's LSCB Annual Report in March 2011.**

63. Wiltshire Teenage Pregnancy Partnership Update

Denzil Longland, Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator, presented a report on the work of the Teenage Pregnancy Partnership with further information on the causes of teenage pregnancy. This followed the report received in November 2009.

Information was provided on the areas that may contribute to the high teenage pregnancy rates in the UK and the work being undertaken in Wiltshire to address this locally, including a network of teenage pregnancy caseworkers and collaborative working between the council and NHS Wiltshire.

Ensuing discussion included:

- (a) Regarding any possible link between teenage pregnancy and affordable housing, it was reported that of the 1126 households housed by Homes4Wiltshire between 1 April 2009 and 1 October 2009, eleven 16-17 year olds had been housed. Thirty-seven 16-17 year old females were on the waiting list, equating to approximately 25% of the 150 teenage pregnancies in Wiltshire per year. It was

unclear whether the list included the number of 16-17 year olds classed as homeless.

- (b) A request was received for further information to include details on the length of time 16-17 year olds stayed on the register before being housed, comparison figures from earlier years, whether the figures already provided included those classified as homeless, and a snapshot of Wiltshire's teenage pregnancy figures from recent years.

Resolved:

- 1. To thank officers for the report and to note its contents.**
- 2. That members would be provided with further information on the length of time 16-17 year olds stay on the housing register before being housed, comparison figures from earlier years, whether the figures already provided in the report included those classified as homeless, and a recent snapshot of Wiltshire's teenage pregnancy figures.**

64. Major Contracts Task Group Update

A written update on the Task Group's 25 February meeting was presented. The Group had considered the council's Children Centre contracts, which would be retendered and come into effect on March 2011. A consultation on the various options for re-tendering had just concluded and Cabinet would receive the results and make the final decision as to the preferred option on 23 March 2010.

Cllr Bill Moss, Chairman of the Major Contracts Task Group, confirmed that the Group's next meeting on 16 April would focus on the council's contract with Quarriers, an external provider of residential places for looked after children (LAC). Prior to this, members would visit The Paddocks, Quarriers' residential home in Melksham. An update on both the visit and the meeting would be provided to the committee in June.

Clarification was sought on whether the Group would consider energy supplier contracts for schools. It was reported that this would fall within the remit of the Environment Select Committee's Major Contracts Task Group and a copy of the minutes and details of the Chairman would be provided.

Following the withdrawal of Rosheen Ryan on the Task Group, the Chairman of the Committee requested that any of the committee's co-opted members interested in taking Mrs Ryan's place please contact officers.

Resolved:

To note the update.

65. **Holding the Executive to Public Account**

This item was reintroduced to the agenda to provide information on those items relating to children's services being considered by Cabinet, Corporate Parenting Panel and Schools Forums.

Resolved:

To note the items listed in the Cabinet, Corporate Parenting Panel and Schools Forum forward work programmes relevant to this committee.

66. **Forward Work Programme**

Changes agreed to the work programme were as follows:

Executive response to Recommendations 5 and 6 of the School Food Task Group – This would now be received in June and would be a full update on the implementation of all of the task group's recommendations regarding school food.

Role of the Schools Forum – Following a request from Cllr Osborn, a representative of the Schools Forum would now attend one of the Committee's meetings to discuss its role.

Youth Services in Wiltshire – Update on the changes to the Youth Work Staffing Allocations for Community, following meetings with Area Boards. This would now be received in July.

Young People Not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs) – (see minute 68) report to be received in July.

Resolved:

To note the Forward Work Programme

67. **Date of Next Meeting**

Thursday 8 June 2010.

68. **Urgent Items**

Following a member request, it was agreed to receive a report on the current level of young people in Wiltshire not in employment, education or training (NEETs) and what the council is doing to tackle this.

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

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