

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 September 2010**

### **Present:-**

<b>Members of the Committee</b>	Councillor Peter Balaam
	“ Robin Hazelton
	“ Julie Jackson
	“ Tilly May
	“ Mike Perry
	“ Carolyn Robbins
	“ John Ross
	“ June Tandy (Chair)

<b>Church Representatives</b>	Joseph Cannon Rex Pogson
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<b>Parent Governor Representatives</b>	John Liddamore Alison Livesey
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<b>Invited Representatives</b>	Max Hyde (Teacher Representative) Claire Sangster (Governor Representative) Chris Smart (Governor Representative)
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<b>Other County Councillors</b>	Councillor David Johnston Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Families)
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<b>Officers</b>	Marion Davis, Strategic Director – Children, Young People and Families Geoff King, Head of Service – Commissioning Planning & Partnerships Division Ann Mawdsley, Principal Committee Administrator Richard Maybey, Assistant to Political Group (Labour) Jane Pollard, Democratic Services Manager Pat Tate, Head of Early Intervention Service
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### **1. Appointment of Vice Chair**

Councillor Mike Perry, seconded by Councillor Tilly May, proposed that Councillor John Ross be elected Vice Chair of the Committee.

A vote was taken and it was resolved that Councillor John Ross be elected Vice Chair of the Committee.

## **2. General**

### **(1) Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillors Carol Fox and Clive Rickhards. The Chair welcomed Councillor David Johnston, who was attending the meeting as an observer.

### **(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests**

Councillor Julie Jackson declared a personal interest as her daughter currently uses post 16 transport.

Councillor Mike Perry declared a personal interest as a Trustee of King Edward Grammar School in Stratford-Upon-Avon.

### **(3) Minutes of the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 1 December 2009**

The minutes of the meeting held on 23 June 2010 were noted with the following corrections:

#### **Page 5 – 5.7 Questions to the Portfolio Holder**

The word “not” in the first line of point 7 to be deleted.

#### **Page 5 – 6.e Post 16 Transport (including students aged 14-16 attending off site learning opportunities)**

The word “cuts” on the second line be replaced with “costs”.

#### **Page 6 - 6.(i) Post 16 Transport (including students aged 14-16 attending off site learning opportunities)**

The word “ways” inserted between “seeking” and “to” on the third line of point (i).

#### **Matters Arising**

#### **Page 6 – 6.3 Post 16 Transport (including students aged 14-16 attending off site learning opportunities)**

In response to a query regarding the progress on the consultation exercise as set out in point 3 on page 6, Marion Davis undertook to arrange for a briefing note to be sent to Members of the Committee.

**(4) Remit of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Noted.

**(5) Chair's Announcements**

The Chair reminded Members they had received an e-mail relating to the Warwickshire Hub on 2 September and as outlined in that e-mail, members of the Partnership and Performance Unit would be in the ante chamber after the meeting for drop in training.

The Chair stated that the Adult Social Care and Health O&S (ASC&H O&S) would be considering the final report of the Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) Review at their meeting on Thursday, 16 September and that Members of the Children and Young People O&S may wish to attend for this item.

**3. Public Question Time**

There were no public questions.

**4. Questions to the Portfolio Holder and 5. Overview of new ways of working for the CYPF Directorate (taken together)**

Marion Davis, Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families Directorate gave a presentation setting out the new ways of working for the Children, Young People and Families Directorate and changes in this area both locally and nationally.

During the discussion the ensuing points were raised:

1. Marion Davis agreed to arrange for Warwickshire GCSE results to be forwarded to Members, including results on an area basis.
2. Following some discussion on the Ofsted report on the Pupil Re-Integration Unit (PRU) in Warwickshire which had resulted in the PRU being placed in special measures, Members requested that a link to the report be sent by e-mail and agreed that a select committee should be held to consider what had gone wrong and to make recommendations on the way forward.
3. The Directorate would continue their commitment to integrated working with partners. Marion Davis added that although there was no longer a statutory requirement to have a Children's Trust, in Warwickshire, partners valued the work of the Trust and wanted it to continue.
4. The Coalition Government was placing a strong emphasis on value for money and community roles, and these had to be considered in light of a greatly reduced budget.

5. The full impact on Local Authority budgets of Academies and Free Schools was still unknown and meetings would continue to be had with Headteachers and Governors on these issues.
6. Polesworth High School had been accepted for Academy status under the Academies Act and The Priors School in Priors Marston had been accepted in Stage 1 of the first round of Free School applications. It was agreed that the Directorate should hold a Member seminar to look at Academies and Free Schools.
7. In response to a query regarding private companies setting up Academies, it was noted that outstanding schools did not require sponsors, and for other schools seeking to become Academies, the Local Authority had no role in these negotiations or contracts.
8. Concern was expressed about selective admissions in Free Schools and Academies. It was noted that Academies were required to comply with the Admissions Code and to be represented on the Warwickshire School Admissions Forum.
9. Warwickshire County Council would continue to offer traded services such as building maintenance and school meals, to all schools, including Academies. If a significant portion of schools opted out of these services, the viability of different services would have to be considered.
10. Due to the uncertainty surrounding future funding and changes to Government policy, the arrangements with Connexions had been extended on a temporary basis.
11. Concern was expressed about the “ready reckoner” on the Department of Education website for schools to calculate the level of funding they should receive as an academy, and allow them to compare this with the funding they currently receive. Marion Davis reported that this was being discussed by the Ministerial Advisory Group, which she attended, and discussions were being held in all forums as more information became available.
12. School Place Planning was ongoing and the significant pressures being faced in different areas across the County were recognised. It was acknowledged that there were a lot of unknown pressures being faced, particularly in terms of the changing role of schools and the Local Authority, making contingency planning extremely difficult. Forecasting was however more accurate due to better data being provided by Health colleagues.
13. Warwickshire’s Building Schools for the Future and Nuneaton Academy new school build proposals were on hold pending the Spending Review in the autumn.
14. There would be no major changes to the management and support of Looked After Children, with the aim of narrowing the gap between these and other children remaining a high priority.
15. It was noted that school improvement would continue to be driven alongside budgetary challenges. Schools would, in the future, be expected to be autonomous, self-supporting and self-

- improving and Governors would have greater responsibility to achieve improvement.
16. Initiatives such as clusters of schools will continue, and the Directorate are currently looking at the Yorkshire model of school federations as a possibility for the future.
  17. The insufficient building maintenance capital to meet the needs in terms of school buildings was an ongoing problem. This allocation would be reduced in future and only the most urgent maintenance would be possible.
  18. Members welcomed the news that there were currently no Warwickshire schools under the failing schools category requiring Interim Executive Boards.

The Chair thanked Councillor Heather Timms and Marion Davis for their presentation.

## **6. Review of Permanent School Exclusions 2010**

Councillor Carolyn Robbins, Chair of the School Exclusions Panel, presented the final report of the Review of Permanent Schools Exclusions 2010.

Councillor Robbins thanked everyone who had participated in the Review, and in particular Paul Williams for his part in ensuring that the Review was a success. She made the following points:

- i. The recommendations set out in the report would connect well with any future scrutiny of the PRU. Members of the Panel had visited two PRUs and there was a general consensus that the lack of integration with peer groups was detrimental to pupils and should be reconsidered.
- ii. The Panel agreed that there should be fewer pupils in the PRU and more emphasis placed on Learning Support Units within schools.
- iii. The Common Assessment Framework (CAF) should be expanded with every school having the ability to instigate CAFs.
- iv. The Panel proposed Recommendations 1-17 for onward transmission to the Cabinet and Recommendations 18-20 for onward transmission to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

1. Discussions with Headteachers regarding Learning Support Units showed general support but there had been some reticence regarding how this would be put into practice.
2. Geoff King noted that in terms of Recommendation 18, the processes required to statement a pupil were statutory processes and could not be altered. This area of work was currently being reviewed nationally.
3. Members agreed that greater pressure needed to be put on Governing Bodies to address illegal exclusions. Geoff King

- added that many Local Authority officers were continually reminding Heads of their roles and legal requirements.
4. CAFs were introduced where there were emerging needs, but it was noted that cases needed to be considered on an individual basis.
  5. Ofsted inspectors looked at fixed term and permanent exclusions which were logged by schools. There was no record of illegal exclusions.
  6. One point of view was expressed that too much emphasis was placed on the legal and illegal aspects of exclusions and that each case should take into account the best interests of the child rather than the school as a whole.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to:

- (i) approve Recommendations 1 – 17 of the School Exclusions Panel (as set out in the Report) for consideration by the Cabinet; and
- (ii) to receive reports on the topics sets out in Recommendations 18, 19 and 20, namely:
  - Statementing of Pupils - to include the legal requirements and what influence can be had outside of statutory requirements and to consider the length of time in different areas leading up to statementing
  - The education of Looked After Children
  - Profile of Special Educational Needs with a focus on behaviour and out of county provision for Warwickshire children.

## **7. Scrutiny of Safeguarding**

Councillor John Ross, Chair of the Safeguarding Task and Finish Group, presented the final report from the Scrutiny of Safeguarding Task and Finish Group.

Councillor Ross thanked everyone who had contributed to the Review, and in particular Michelle McHugh, whose contribution had been invaluable. He noted the following points:

- a. High profile cases like Baby P in Haringey and Khyra Ishaq in Birmingham highlighted systemic failings in how local services work together to protect children from harm, which in turn highlighted the need to ensure that processes and partnership working in Warwickshire were effective.
- b. The resulting increase in awareness of child protection issues locally and nationally has resulted in local authorities experiencing a significant increase in the number of referrals to

- child protection and the number of children subject to a child protection plan, putting huge pressure on the service.
- c. The Task and Finish Group scrutinised the effectiveness of the processes within Warwickshire and the implications of the increased demand.
  - d. Overall the Task and Finish Group found that child protection processes in Warwickshire are sound and robust, and congratulate all those working in child protection for their commitment, dedication and professionalism.
  - e. A number of areas had been identified for improvement, including managing the increased workload, accommodation and structure of the service, improving communication surrounding thresholds and referral processes and partnership working.

During the ensuing discussion, the following points were raised:

- 1. The service was working at full capacity but there was some concern around the potential implications of the Spending Review in the autumn.
- 2. Within Warwickshire, all schools had a designated teacher with safeguarding responsibilities and Referral systems and partnership working across the County was very effective. Governing bodies of schools were also offered seminars on safeguarding children.
- 3. Evidence was that recruitment and retention of social workers in Warwickshire was good with support for newly qualified social workers better than elsewhere. There was also evidence of good practice of Warwickshire “growing their own” social workers.
- 4. The issue of unattended asylum seekers had been considered, and it was noted that while there were not many such children in Warwickshire, where cases did arise, the necessary safeguarding and support were put in place, and were more complex to manage.
- 5. Warwickshire had a good system of safeguarding because of the good relationships that had been built between partners and the level of support that was put in place at an early stage.

The Committee endorsed the report and the recommendations of the Scrutiny of Safeguarding Task and Finish Group and agreed to forward the Recommendations to the Cabinet for consideration.

## **8. Work Programme 2010-11**

The Committee agreed the Work Programme with the inclusion of a full day, special select committee meeting to be held on Wednesday, 24 November 2010 to consider the PRU. Members requested that arrangements be made for Committee members to visit the PRU before the meeting.

It was noted that the Post 16 Transport Select Committee would be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Board at their meeting on 5 October. If the Board supported this review, they would set up the membership.

Members requested a short report to the next meeting (20 October) on Attainment, setting out on an area-by-area basis attainment across age groups (primary and secondary), SEN and LAC.

Members requested a report, as soon as the information was available, on the outcome of the Government Spending Review.

## **9. Any Other Items**

There were no urgent items.

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Chair

The Committee rose at 1:10 p.m.