

Minutes of the Meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 March 2011

Present:-

Members of the Committee	Councillor Peter Balaam “ Robin Hazelton “ Julie Jackson “ Mike Perry “ Clive Rickhards “ Carolyn Robbins “ John Ross “ June Tandy (Chair)
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Invited Representatives	Max Hyde (Teacher Representative) Chris Smart (Governor Representative) Diana Turner (Governor Representative)
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Other County Councillors	Councillor Heather Timms (Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Families)
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Officers	Jenny Butlin-Moran, Acting Assistant Head of Service – Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Service Development Liz Holt, Assistant Head of Service – Manager of Commissioning Support Service Ann Mawdsley, Principal Committee Administrator Tricia Morrison, Head of Performance Jane Pollard, Democratic Services Manager
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1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Joe Cannon, Councillor Carol Fox, Alison Livesey, Councillor Tilly May, Councillor Mike Perry, Rex Pogson and Marion Davis.

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Councillor Julie Jackson declared a personal interest as her daughter currently uses post 16 transport and as a former member of the PRU Management Committee.

Councillor Carolyn Robbins declared a personal interest as her grandson currently uses post 16 transport.

(3) Minutes of the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 2 February 2011

The minutes of the meeting held on 2 February 2011 were agreed with the following corrections:

Page 1 – 1. General (2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

The words “granddaughter” to be replaced with the word “grandson” in the last line.

Matters Arising

The Chair reported that the Cabinet had agreed all the recommendations in relation to the Strategic Plan for the PRU on 17 February. A further report was scheduled to be brought to the next meeting of O&S.

(4) Chair’s Announcements

None.

2. Public Question Time

The Chair stated that she had agreed to receive a public question from Mr Don Bates, a Southam resident. She noted that as the Portfolio Holder had been delayed, that Mr Bates had accepted that a written response would have to be requested.

Mr Bates put the following question to the Committee:

“I suspect that some of the better students are being rejected by the 11+ process. WCC refuses to provide me with the 11+ syllabus or the 11+ selection criteria so I decided to analyse GCSE performance data covering a sample cohort of students who took the 11+ (obtained through FOI). The analysis suggests that of the students in the cohort gaining the highest number of GCSE A and A, a number of students equivalent to 39% of the Grammar School intake failed the 11+.*

Can somebody get the WCC to explain the selection criteria used for awarding Grammar School places and explain why so many poorly performing students in GCSE terms are being awarded places?”

The Chair thanked Mr Bates for attending the meeting and undertook to ensure that a response to Bates was provided by the Portfolio

Holder, a copy of which would be provided to the Committee.

3. Questions to the Portfolio Holder

The Portfolio Holder was delayed and therefore not available to answer questions.

4. Development of Draft Measures and Targets in Support of the CBP 2011-13

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Chief Executive presenting the proposed measures and targets for inclusion relevant to the remit of the Children & Young People Portfolio.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were noted:

1. The report outlined the key set of measures for the County Council, but there was a further set of measures that would be used at operational and Business Unit Level.
2. There was some concern that the Pupil Reintegration Units were not referred to in the key measures.
3. The measures and targets set out in the report were too broad-brush to enable any meaningful scrutiny.
4. Concern was raised that within the measures and targets there was no plan to address the decreasing performance of a significant proportion of vulnerable children in Warwickshire.
5. Concern was raised that while there was an ambition to reduce the number of NEETs in Warwickshire, this came at a time when the Connexions and Career Advice services were under threat.
6. Liz Holt reassured Members that the focus of the Directorate would remain on vulnerable groups and the differences in terms of outcomes for Special Educational Needs, Looked After Children and children receiving Free School Meals remained a key focus.
7. Members agreed that Warwickshire County Council had a duty towards all children and young people and that the performance of these children in Academies needed to be monitored. It was not certain how this would be achieved in light of the autonomy Academies would operate under. It was agreed that where possible Academies should be encouraged to include WCC nominated governors and increase the number of parent governors on their Governing Bodies.
8. Officers would be looking at a new performance framework in line with Business Units and the role of Overview and Scrutiny could be considered in this. The Audit and Standards Committee also received regular performance reports as part of their remit.
9. In terms of selecting targets for inclusion in the Plan, it was noted that some targets were only recorded on an annual basis which made quarterly reporting difficult.

10. School performance priority activity would be carried out with any schools not judged to be good or outstanding.
11. Performance of Academies would be monitored by the Department for Education.
12. Members agreed to receive a further report to their next meeting setting out Directorate Targets
13. Max Hyde suggested that it would be useful for Members to receive regular alerts regarding changes brought about in relation to schools. Liz Holt agreed to look into this.

Having considered and challenged the draft measures and targets listed within Appendix A that would support the delivery of the Corporate Business Plan 2011-13, it was agreed that the views of the Committee be passed on to the Overview and Scrutiny Board for their meeting on 10 March 2011.

5. Work Programme 2010-11

Jane Pollard noted the following changes to the Forward Plan Items set out in the report:

PAYP Transition to Third Sector – this report had been deferred indefinitely. The Chair requested that this report be brought to O&S at an appropriate time and that it was imperative that elected members be kept informed about developments in their divisions.

Child Poverty Strategy – this report would be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 17 March 2011.

Coleshill Youth Centre – this report would be considered by the Cabinet at their meeting on 14 April 2011.

The Committee noted the Work Programme with the following changes:

6 April 2011 (morning only meeting)

Questions to the Portfolio Holder

Special Educational Needs and Disability Green Paper - Introduction

PRU – Interim Report

Work Programme

8 June 2011 (full day meeting)

Questions to the Portfolio Holder

Special Educational Needs and Disability Green Paper - Report

Impact of Government Spending Review

Academies and Traded Services

PRU – Report

Scrutiny of Bullying (including within the report, an update from the Police on progress they are making in relation to cyber bullying)

Work Programme

1 September 2011

Questions to the Portfolio Holder

Academies and Traded Services

In Year Fair Access Protocol

Report on the independent review of child protection by Professor

Eileen Munroe

Work Programme

The Chair reminded Members that if they had any issues they wanted considered at the meetings, that these should be fed through the Chair and Party Spokespersons for consideration at their agenda planning meetings. She also noted that the Committee would have to take cognisance of the reduction in staffing with Directorates, which would have an impact on the production of reports.

6. Any Other Items

There were no urgent items.

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Chair

The Committee rose at 11.10 a.m.