

**Minutes of the meeting of the  
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
held on 3 June 2014**

**Present**

**Members:**

Councillor Jonathan Chilvers  
Councillor Martin Heatley (replacing Councillor Angela Warner for this meeting)  
Councillor Bob Hicks (Chair)  
Councillor Julie Jackson (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Dave Parsons  
Councillor Dave Shilton  
Councillor Jenny St. John  
Councillor John Whitehouse  
Councillor Chris Williams

**Co-opted members:**

John McRoberts, Parent Governor Representative

**Other Councillors:**

Councillor Colin Hayfield, Portfolio Holder, Education and Learning  
Councillor Bob Stevens, Portfolio Holder, Health

**Officers:**

Georgina Atkinson, Democratic Services Team Leader  
Bill Basra, Partnerships Delivery Manager  
Sarah Bradwell, Partnerships Manager, Secondary Phase Team  
Hugh Disley, Head of Early Help and Targeted Support  
Phil Evans, Head of Localities and Community Safety  
Nick Gower-Johnson, Priority Families Co-ordinator  
Helen King, Deputy Director of Public Health  
Chris Lewington, Head of Service, Strategic Commissioning  
Nigel Minns, Head of Learning and Achievement  
Adrian Wells, Interim Service Manager, Integrated Disability Service

**Other representatives:**

Diana Turner, Warwickshire Governors Association

**Members of the public:**

Rebecca Page, Family Voice Warwickshire

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**1. Appointment of Chair to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Bob Hicks was duly elected as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2014/15 municipal year.

**2. Appointment of Vice-Chair to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

Councillor Julie Jackson was duly elected as Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the 2014/15 municipal year.

**3. General**

**(1) Apologies**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor Angela Warner (replaced by Councillor Martin Heatley for this meeting), Councillor Mike Brain, Joseph Cannon and Chris Smart.

**(2) Members' Disclosures of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interest**

Councillor Whitehouse declared a non-pecuniary interest; the nature of the interest being that he was a Governor at St. John's Nursery and Primary School in Kenilworth and Chair of Trustees of the Kenilworth Centres.

Councillor Jackson declared a non-pecuniary interest; the nature of the interest being that she was a governor at Oakwood Academy which has a nursery; that she was a trustee for the Nicholas Chamberlaine Schools Foundation; and that she had a relative with a disability.

Councillor Hicks declared a non-pecuniary interest; the nature of the interest being that his daughter was employed at St Michael's School and that this daughter-in-law was employed at Stockingford School.

Councillor Parsons declared a non-pecuniary interest; the nature of the interest being that he was a governor at Nethersoles Church of England Academy, Polesworth, and that his son was a teacher at The Croft Junior School.

Diana Turner declared a non-pecuniary interest; the nature of the interest being that she had a grandson who was mentally disabled.

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Councillor Shilton declared a non-pecuniary interest; the nature of the interest being that he had a grandson who had a disability; that he was the governor of the Coventry and Warwickshire Partnership Trust; and that he was the Mental Health Champion for the County Council.

**(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 2 April 2014**

The Committee agreed that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 2 April 2014 be signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record, subject to the following addition:

Page 2, Item 1 (2), Members' Disclosure of Pecuniary and Non-Pecuniary Interests

That Councillor Jackson also declared a non-pecuniary interest; the nature of the interest being that she had a relative who had a disability.

With regard to Item 6, 'Adoption Process and Scorecards' the Committee agreed to request a briefing note for December 2014 to provide an update on the County Council's performance in respect of adoption targets and process times.

**4. Public Question Time**

Rebecca Page, Family Voice Warwickshire, requested clarification on the consultation process for the Local Offer for the Integrated Disability Service, appertaining to: a) whether the consultation would be available online; and b) whether the seven week period between 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2014 and Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 was sufficient to conduct a robust public consultation and analyse the findings, in order to present a final proposal.

Rebecca Page asked a supplementary question with regard to the indication that had been presented to the Committee on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2014 that the public consultation would include a range of options and requested clarification on whether the Parent Carers group should have been involved in the development of those options.

The Chair advised that the public consultation and information on the proposed Local Offer would be considered by the Committee at Item 12, 'Integrated Disability Service' on the agenda and that the officers would be present to provide a response to those questions.

With regard to legislative requirements regarding public consultations, Chris Lewington, Head of Strategic Commissioning, advised that there was no legally defined timeline for a consultation process; however, the authority must be able to evidence that it had given sufficient time and opportunity for the public to respond to the consultation and that it had

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given due consideration to the outcome of the consultation in reaching its final decision.

**5. Questions to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders**

The Committee considered the proposed decision to be taken by the Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning in respect of the Home to School Transport Policy. The Portfolio Holder advised that the decision was likely to be deferred until September 2014 and agreed that a further update would be presented to the Committee at its meeting scheduled for 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2014.

A concern was raised regarding the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection into schools' performance and that a number of schools had been graded as 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate'. The Portfolio Holder accepted that there was disparity between school performance, particularly between the north and south of the county. Nigel Minns, Head of Learning and Achievement, added that it was a key priority to achieve 100% of Warwickshire children attending schools that were 'good' or 'outstanding'. In response, John McRoberts stressed the importance of ensuring that those underperforming schools received sufficient improvement support from the County Council.

A discussion took place with regard to the report that had been circulated by Family Voice Warwickshire and members raised concerns regarding the issues that had been reported. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to request a briefing note that addressed the issues raised in the report.

**6. Early Years Commissioning**

Chris Lewington, Head of Strategic Commissioning, provided a verbal update on the outcome of the procurement exercise in respect of the Early Years services and Children's Centres. She confirmed that all 39 Children's Centres would remain open under a ten group and collaboration model and that, on 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2014, Barnardo Services Ltd and The Parenting Project had been announced as the selected providers. Members were provided with a brief summary of the background and experience of both providers in delivering Children's Centres.

The Committee requested clarification on the total cost of delays in the overall procurement process. Chris Lewington advised that it was estimated to be up to £600,000 which would be addressed as part of the Medium Term Financial Plan. She added that the transfer of Children's Centres would be completed in three tranches: 1<sup>st</sup> July, 1<sup>st</sup>

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August and 1<sup>st</sup> September 2014. At present, the transfers were all on track to be completed to timescale.

A discussion took place with regard to the feedback from smaller providers who had been involved in the procurement exercise, which had indicated a need for greater support and training by the County Council. Despite this area for future development, Chris Lewington advised that standard of applications by providers had been high and the outcome of the procurement scoring had been close. Although it was not considered that the pension liability had prevented any providers from applying, there was no certainty as to whether any providers had chosen to withdraw as a result of that liability.

Councillor Whitehouse expressed concern at the communication with members following the confirmation of selected providers, which he considered had been unsatisfactory. Chris Lewington accepted that communication could have been improved and apologised for the oversight.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the update and request:

- 1) A list of the Children's Centres to be transferred under each tranche;
- 2) Information on the rationale for the selection of Barnardo Services Ltd (once no longer commercially sensitive);
- 3) Clarification on whether, and to what extent, the Social Value Act had been considered as part of the procurement process;
- 4) That a representative from both Barnardo Services Ltd and The Parenting Group be invited to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2014 meeting to present their aspirations and plans for the Children's Centres; and
- 5) That a briefing for members be arranged to provide information and assurances on: the County Council's approach to commissioning to ensure that micro enterprises were being positively engaged; the consideration of Social Value; the balance of transparency against commercial sensitivity; and the parameters for commissioning to ensure that locally experienced providers could be captured.

**7. Work Programme 2014/15**

The Chair presented the Committee with the proposed Work Programme for 2014/15. Members were advised that document would be refreshed following the Annual Work Programme event which had

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been scheduled for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014, commencing 9.30 a.m. at Northgate House. The programme for the event would be circulated in due course and was to involve a café style approach that will allow all members in attendance to record their suggestions and priorities for the forthcoming year.

With regard to Appendix D, the Committee noted the two outstanding actions in respect of a) web links to Youth Centres; and b) the County Council's policy in respect of Early Years Training Centres. The Portfolio Holder for Health and the Portfolio Holder for Education and Learning agreed to address these two actions respectively.

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

- 1) Approve the Work Programme for 2014/15;
- 2) Note the arrangements for the Annual Work Programme event on 30<sup>th</sup> July 2014;
- 3) Note the updates on the Transition of Mental Health Services Task and Finish Group and the Super Priority Areas Task and Finish Group;
- 4) Receive the invitation from the Adult Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to attend the meeting scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> July 2014;
- 5) Give consideration to the invitation of community groups, partners and services users to present their views on key topics included in the Committee's Work Programme; and
- 6) Request that the 'Performance of Warwickshire Children and Young People in National Tests and Examinations' item, scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014, include clarity on the County Council's strategy for how members, as 'Champion of the Learner', could successfully address school underperformance.

## **8. Head of Learning and Achievement**

Nigel Minns, Head of Learning and Achievement, presented the Committee with his vision for the service which included three priorities that all children and young people should: 1) attend a school rated as either 'good' or 'outstanding'; 2) have an equal opportunity to achieve, regardless of external factors; and 3) should have access to positive opportunities at the end of the secondary school phase. He added that it was essential for the Learning and Achievement service to be structured and resourced appropriately, with clear strategies in place,

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to deliver those three priorities. In particular, there would be a key focus on school improvement, the relationship with academies, developing a clear Sufficiency Strategy, and robust support for vulnerable children.

Nigel Minns explained that working with the Portfolio Holders, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and local elected members was essential to gaining the intelligence and expertise required to successfully shape policy and service delivery. The Committee welcomed the vision and priorities expressed by Nigel Minns and stressed the importance of achieving the support of all elected members.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the report and request that a written version of Nigel Minns' vision for the Learning and Achievement service be circulated to all elected members.

**9. Educational Provision for 14-19 Year Olds**

The Committee received a report from Sarah Bradwell, Partnerships Manager (Secondary Education Phase) which outlined recent developments to address skills shortages in the county and methods to support young people in gaining employability skills. Following questioning from the Committee, the following points were noted:

- 1) The Coventry and Warwickshire Local Enterprise Partnership (CWLEP) have supported capital projects from Coventry and Warwickshire Colleges for the provision of science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) training and education;
- 2) Careers Guidance provision in schools was now assessed by Ofsted and network meetings were undertaken with key partners and employers, such as CWLEP and Jaguar Land Rover, to discuss career and apprenticeship opportunities. In light of this, progress was being made towards developing a consistent approach to careers guidance and support across the county;
- 3) Reasons for the 20 per cent decrease in responses to the annual pupil survey in 2013 would be sought;
- 4) Employers were actively involved in vocational education schemes in Studio Schools and University Technical Colleges to ensure that the curriculum was aligned according to employer need;
- 5) Public transport availability was not considered to be a significant barrier to young people accessing education, training and apprenticeship opportunities;

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- 6) It was equally as important that young people were guided and supported towards positive employment destinations that were appropriate for them, in order to secure better life chances for the individuals; and
- 7) Work experience opportunities were still being offered to young people at Key Stage 4 and via the post-16 study programmes.

A discussion took place with regard to the creation of a Youth Transition Partnership. Sarah Bradwell advised that it was in the early stages of consideration and that its likely appointment would be as a sub-group of the CWLEP, due to the location of existing education and training providers. A report on options would be presented to Cabinet in due course.

The Chair suggested that members of the Committee should attend the Skills Show which would be held at the Birmingham NEC in November 2014.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee congratulated Sarah Bradwell for the positive progress achieved and agreed to note the report and request:

- 1) Information on the County Council's 34 apprenticeship placements; and
- 2) That Democratic Services organise the Committee's attendance at the Skills Show.

**10. Child Poverty Strategy**

Members considered the report from Bill Basra, Partnerships Manager, with regard to the Child Poverty Strategy. An overview of the national context was given where it was evident that the Government's aspiration to eradicate Child Poverty by 2020 would not be met. Locally, it was reported that the Child Poverty Strategy had been approved by Cabinet in 2011 and that, by early 2012, challenges with the delivery of the Strategy had been identified, primarily due a lack the national context, a lack of SMART measures and multi-agency ownership. In light of this, the majority of activity that had been undertaken since the approval of the Strategy had occurred independently of the document, rather than driven by it.

As there was now a renewed approach from Government and greater local interest, it was an opportune time to refresh the Strategy with the aim to launch on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2015.



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Nick Gower-Johnson, Priority Families Co-ordinator, advised that there was an opportunity to align the Child Poverty Strategy with the Priority Families Programme due to a similarity in family-based issues, such as low inter-generational aspirations and poor educational attainment.

A discussion took place regarding the alignment and focus of the future Strategy. The Committee considered that the Strategy should focus the activity of the County Council and its partners on a small number of tangible and deliverable outcomes that would in particular break the cycle of child poverty and focus on prevention. The themes suggested in the response to Government appertaining to Early Intervention, Working with Schools and Priority Families were broadly welcomed. Suggested actions also related to adult and community learning, addressing food poverty through the provision of cookery classes and school breakfast clubs and Financial Capability.

It was requested that a shortlist of such priorities, and the anticipated outcomes, be presented to a future meeting to enable members to comment on the proposals and assist in shaping the focus of the refreshed Strategy. As this would coincide with the refresh of the Priority Families criteria, members requested that both reports be presented together.

The Committee stressed that support should be provided at the earliest stage of a child's life, prior to school age, and that school staff should be trained to recognise and report the signs of child poverty and neglect.

Phil Evans, Head of Localities and Community Safety, explained the importance of the County Council in taking the lead role in the ownership and delivery of the Strategy. He added that the Strategy should be embedded across the organisation and all key partners to ensure that all activity would positively address child poverty.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the report and request an update on the Child Poverty Strategy and the Priority Families Programme at its meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> November 2014.

## **11. Priority Families Programme**

Nick Gower-Johnson, Priority Families Co-ordinator, provided the Committee with an overview of the Priority Families Programme, including the background, recent progress in Warwickshire, funding and future proposals. Families were currently identified as a 'priority' through three national criteria: crime/anti-social behaviour; education; and worklessness. This criteria had identified 805 families and, to date, 63% of those families had been positively 'turned round' which had

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placed Warwickshire as 16<sup>th</sup> in the national league table and the top performing authority in the West Midlands. Nick Gower-Johnson explained that the success was primarily due to the positive partnership buy-in and support. As the Programme was voluntary, approximately eight per cent of families refused to engage.

Members were advised that, from a financial perspective, the Programme was in a healthy position and that all expenditure over the three year period had been fully met by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) grant. It was anticipated a surplus of £500,000 would remain by the end of March 2015, which would be directed to supporting vulnerable people and families.

Members noted that the criteria for identifying priority families was due to widen to include other features such as drug/alcohol abuse, domestic abuse and mental health problems. The Committee expressed its support for the proposed refreshed criteria, in particular the engagement with schools and Children's Centres.

In response to a question raised, Nick Gower-Johnson advised that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had released an intervention programme to address inter-generational worklessness; however, this had been launched separate to the DCLG Troubled Families Programme and there had subsequently been challenges to co-ordinate the two programmes at a local level. This challenge had been experienced nationally and was not unique to Warwickshire. A DWP employee had been seconded to the County Council's Priority Families team and this had helped to unravel some of the challenges and achieve a constructive link between the programmes.

With regard to the long-term sustainability of those families who had engaged in the programme, members were advised that progress checks at six months, 12 months and two years were undertaken; however, it was recognised that support within the community could play a significant role in securing longer-term achievement for families and the surplus funding could be directed to delivering such provision.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee congratulated Nick Gower-Johnson for the success of the Programme and agreed to request that:

- 1) An update on the Priority Families Programme and the refreshed criteria be presented at the meeting scheduled for 4<sup>th</sup> November 2014;
- 2) Data regarding Priority Families in each electoral division be circulated; and

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- 3) Information about the partnership event scheduled for 14<sup>th</sup> July 2014 be circulated, with an invitation for up to three members to attend.

## **12. Integrated Disability Service**

Hugh Disley, Head of Early Help and Targeted Support, advised members that a single assessment framework for the Social Care Local Offer had been recently published for public consultation. It was anticipated that the full Local Offer, which would include both health and education, would be combined in the near future to deliver a holistic package of support for children and young people with special education needs or disabilities. Following the consultation period, the proposed Local Offer would be presented to Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2014 for consideration.

Adrian Wells, Interim Service Manager (Integrated Disability Service), presented the Committee with the proposed Local Offer Framework and Personal Budgets for Social Care and Short Breaks. He explained that the “level of need” in the Framework had been determined by the Safeguarding Board’s agreed thresholds of service. The four-week consultation plan included a range of daytime and evening meetings throughout June, in each of the county’s district and borough areas. Consultation documents were available online and would be publicised via various communication channels and direct contact with existing service users. Members commented that engaging families that may not be existing service users was equally as important and were reassured that the involvement of partners would address this.

The Chair referred to the questions that had been raised by a representative of Family Voice Warwickshire under Item 4, ‘Public Question Time’. In response, Adrian Wells advised that this next stage of consultation reflected the 12 weeks of consultation that had been undertaken during 2013. He considered that the additional four weeks and scheduled consultation meetings provided sufficient opportunity for service users to respond to the proposal. It was anticipated that a further consultation would commence on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015 to invite feedback on the impact of the new Local Offer. Hugh Disley added that the Reference Group which had been established in January 2014 would continue to meet monthly in order to develop and monitor the Local Offer with parents, carers and schools and ensure that issues raised, such as those by Family Voice Warwickshire, could be addressed.

In response to a question raised, Adrian Wells advised that the initial intention was to consult on a range of options; however, the significant reduction in the budget had restricted what options could be delivered and therefore a single option had been identified that would make the

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most effective use of funding in order to support the families in most need.

A discussion took place with regard to respite care provision in the county, associated costs and availability for families. Members were advised that within a reduce budget it was essential that service provision was more efficient to ensure a balanced spread of support for families.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the report and request that:

- 1) The full Local Offer which included social care, education and health be presented at a future meeting, once available; and
- 2) A single item meeting be scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> July 2016 to consider the outcome of the public consultation and the final proposed Local Offer in order to agree a collective view to present to Cabinet on 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2014.

### **13. Implications of the Budget**

The Committee considered the report which highlighted the One Organisational Plan savings relating to Children and Young People services and associated functions.

A query was raised with regard to the level of member involvement in the delivery of the changes required to achieve significant savings, such as the £6.3 million reduction in the transport budget. Hugh Disley advised that information on the proposed changes and potential implications would be shared with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the appropriate time. Although this particular savings plan had a Year One target of £0, members were reassured that work to deliver the £2.3 million target in Year Two had commenced.

A discussion took place with regard to targeted savings in placement numbers for Looked After Children. Members noted that the intention of the revised threshold document was to ensure that intervention was appropriate and at the right level, to ensure that cases could be escalated quicker and dealt with more efficiently. It also focused on delivering a holistic approach to family support that could positively mitigate the need for children to be placed in Looked After care. The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the report.

### **14. Any Urgent Items**

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None.

**15. Date of Next Meeting**

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted that the date of the next meeting had been scheduled for 16<sup>th</sup> July 2014 as a single item meeting to consider the proposed Cabinet report regarding the Local Offer for the Integrated Disability Service.

The Committee rose at 3.50 p.m.

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Chair