

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

Present

Members:

Councillor Mike Brain
Councillor Jonathan Chilvers
Councillor Bob Hicks (Chair)
Councillor Julie Jackson (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Dave Parsons
Councillor Dave Shilton
Councillor Jenny St. John
Councillor Angela Warner
Councillor John Whitehouse
Councillor Chris Williams

Other Councillors:

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

Officers:

Elizabeth Abbott, Business Partner (Planning, Performance and Improvement)
Georgina Atkinson, Democratic Services Team Leader
Hugh Disley, Head of Early Help and Targeted Support
Wendy Fabbro, Strategic Director, People Group
Cornelia Heaney, WSCB Development Manager
Chris Lewington, Head of Service, Strategic Commissioning
Lisa Lissaman, Commissioner Mental Health and Autism
Nigel Minns, Head of Learning and Achievement
Ben Patel-Sadler, Democratic Services Officer
Steve Pendleton, Head of Vulnerable Groups and the Virtual School
Karen Smith, Customer Relations Manager

Other representatives:

Joseph Cannon, Church representative
John McRoberts, Parent Governor representative
Diana Turner, Warwickshire Governors Association

Members of the public:

Rebecca Page, Family Voice Warwickshire

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

1. General

(1) Apologies

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of 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. She also 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. He was also a lifetime Vice President of MENCAP.

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 Primary School.

Councillor Dave Shilton declared a non-pecuniary interest; the nature of the interest being that he was a member of Warwick District Council.

Councillor Angela Warner declared a non-pecuniary interest; the nature of the interest being that she was a non-executive director of the South Warwickshire Foundation NHS Trust.

Councillor Brain declared a non-pecuniary interest; the nature of the interest being that he was a Governor of Quinton Primary School.

Councillor Bob Stevens declared an interest; the nature of the interest being that he was governor of Southam College.

(3) Minutes of the meeting held on 2 September 2014

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

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

Item 8 – Academies and Free Schools Scrutiny Action Plan: That there was no additional funding provided for the scrutiny of academies. This was confirmed by the Head of Learning and Achievement

Regarding the same item, the Committee requested an update in relation to the Briefing Notes that were due to be provided to them on the findings of the Review of School Improvement and the role of the Regional Schools Commissioner respectively. Members were assured by the Head of Learning and Achievement that the Briefing Notes would be provided to them as soon as possible.

2. Public Question Time

Two written questions had been put to the Committee by Rebecca Page from Family Voice, Warwickshire. The questions and information related to them had been provided to members and officers in advance of the meeting.

Ms Page put both of her questions to the Committee:

1.) Are the current budget conditions in IDS (Integrated Disability Service) conflicting with the financial principles surrounding Warwickshire's Early Help Policy- in effect blocking children with disabilities and their families from accessing Early Intervention and thus allowing disability care issues to escalate to a level requiring more expensive services?

2.) Taking account of the changed proposals for the re-organisation of IDS and the fact that service has already changed for some families, is it necessary to request a new impact statement as soon as possible so that a debate about the original budget reduction can happen over the next few months and appropriate decisions can be made?

Wendy Fabbro, Strategic Director, People Group explained that services were allocated to be appropriate and proportionate to the families who require them. Some families who received services from the IDS may have had their respite care night's allocation adjusted whilst the current consultation around the service was being carried out. It was the Council's opinion that wherever possible, the best environment for a disabled child was always within a family environment, rather than within an institutionalised one.

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

The Council was seeking to deliver a better service for the County's children, but the need to consult on how services will be delivered in the future was partly due to current budget pressures on the service. It would be difficult to compare past figures in relation to IDS as the future service model had neither been decided or implemented- the Council was still at the consultation stage with users of the service and no final decisions had been made.

The Committee expressed concern that there had been a number of cases where children had received a cut in their services. Hugh Disley, Head of Early Help and Targeted Support assured members that if there were urgent needs for service users, there was a process in place where priority was given to them. The Council encouraged families to ask for an impact statement to be taken from them as soon as possible. This would enable their needs to be assessed by the Council at an early stage; with appropriate plans put in place should any urgent issues be identified.

The Committee supported the way in which impact statements were used to determine the appropriate levels of service given to children and their families- informed decision making would be crucial to deliver appropriate levels of service for children and young people.

Wendy Fabbro assured the Committee that the Council was compliant with current legislation and that services were run on a needs based level.

Members were assured further that the Council was proactive when services were withdrawn and would work with parents and carers to provide appropriate levels of care. The Council always had to look at providing best value and were duty bound to look at all of the options available. Providing for the needs of children and young people with disabilities was always at the forefront of any final decisions taken by the service providers.

Throughout the current consultation period which would be ending on 23rd November 2014, the Council was working with Family Voice, other local support organisations and service users to gather as much information and as many views as possible. The final report would be written throughout December and would be presented to the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration at its meeting on the 6th January 2015 before its submission to Cabinet.

Members wished to place on record their thanks to Rebecca for delivering a recent training session on autism which had been very well received by all who attended.

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

3. Questions to Cabinet and Portfolio Holders

A question was raised in relation to the Schools Sufficiency Strategy- specifically the Kenilworth school funding lag issue.

Nigel Minns, Head of Learning and Achievement informed the Committee that no final decisions had been taken at this stage. Discussions were ongoing with the Kenilworth school, with all funding arrangements being provisional at present. Council officers would be meeting with the EFA (Education Funding Agency) to see if funding from central government might be available.

Discussions were also taking place with schools across the county regarding school places and the potential for some schools being expanded and/or new schools built to accommodate an increased number of pupils.

It was the Council's preferred option to expand both Myton and Campion schools instead of building a new school.

A further question was raised in relation to School Admission Arrangements 2016/17, specifically on the revised admission arrangements to nursery schools. At the present time there were instances where a child could be offered a nursery place, only then to experience a delay in starting. The revised policy would seek to address this issue by enabling Council-run establishments to compete with private nursery providers (where if a space is available, a child can start almost immediately). The Council was seeking to ensure that a child could start at nursery immediately after a place had been offered to them.

4. Warwickshire All Age Autism Strategy (2014-17) and Delivery Plan

Chris Lewington, Head of Strategic Commissioning, introduced the report and provided the Committee with an update on its progress. The ability to identify individuals who have undiagnosed autism would be very challenging. The Council was working with members of the Autism Partnership Board (APB) to determine how this data could be recorded and captured. People attending and registering at Job Centre Plus centres were now being encouraged to declare their autism so that they could be tracked to find out how they access employment. The first meeting of the APB was due to take place in December 2014. After the first meeting of the Board, the Committee would receive regular updates on the delivery and progress of the Strategy.

The Committee acknowledged that it was sometimes difficult for adults with autism to secure permanent employment. Although the Strategy

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

looked at very specific areas such as this, the entire county would be analysed, with any potential patterns being identified.

Chris Lewington informed members that it was important for the All Age Autism Strategy to be presented at this Committee so that members could be updated on how young people with autism could be tracked as they grow into adulthood to ensure they are being provided with appropriate support and guidance.

In response to a question raised, members were advised that this work linked closely with the Warwickshire SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities)- the aim of the strategy was to provide young people with a positive destination.

Hugh Disley informed the Committee that the SEND regulations now covered the 0-25 age range; hence why it would be useful for the Committee to consider the report.

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

- 1.) Note the content of this report and agree that an update on the implementation of the Delivery Plan and Strategy progress be brought to the April 2015 meeting of the Committee.
- 2.) Appoint Councillor Bob Hicks as the representative on the Autism Partnership Board.
- 3.) Schedule the Scrutiny Action Plan for the April 2015 meeting.

5. Work Programme 2014/15

The Chair presented the Committee with the proposed Work Programme for 2014/15.

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

- 1) Approve the Work Programme for 2014/15;
- 2) Note the update on the Transition of Mental Health Services Task and Finish Group.
- 3) Note the arrangements for attendance at the Skills Show on 14th November 2014.
- 4) Request clarification on the membership of the Transition of

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

Mental Health Services Task and Finish Group.

- 5) Request a Briefing Note on the transition of children's services from the NHS to Public Health.
- 6) Request that a report be presented on a six monthly basis to update members on any safeguarding issues.
- 7) Defer the Priority Families Programme report to the 7th April 2015 meeting by which time the Priority Families Outcomes Plan will have been completed.
- 8) Extend an invitation to the two independent providers of Children's Centres to attend the April 2015 meeting of the Committee.
- 9) Note the update on the recommendations and actions previously agreed.

6. Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2014

Cornelia Heaney, WSCB Development Manager introduced the report and highlighted the key messages contained within. Pages nine and ten of the report listed the members of the Board and its sub-committees. Members were informed that it was a requirement for the report to be provided to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), the Chief Executive of Warwickshire County Council (WCC), the Leader of WCC and the Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The Committee considered the report and noted that there had been an increase in safeguarding activity, with more referrals being made to social workers. It was an encouraging sign that there had been an increase in early interventions. The recording of the numbers of vulnerable disabled children and vulnerable children from an ethnic minority background had improved. As a result, it was demonstrated that both groups were under-represented in safeguarding activity, raising the issue that their safeguarding needs were not being identified.

The Board hoped that the Police would be able to provide them with information in the future around the number of investigations being undertaken in relation to vulnerable children. The Police were hoping to increase the conviction rate of perpetrators, with discussions ongoing between partners on how best to increase the speed and quality of the response when safeguarding concerns are raised.

In future reports, members wanted to see figures on FGM (Female Genital Mutilation) included in the WSCB Annual Report.

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

Although the focus nationally and in Rotherham had been around organised networks abusing young children, members were informed that abuse also occurs within localities on a much smaller scale.

Members recognised the need for them to be proactive in this area of work and endorsed the recommendations put forward from the Leaders Liaison Group.

Wendy Fabbro would provide members with a link to Warwickshire's CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) Strategy. She also informed the Committee that the Regional Directors of Children's Services had met to share ideas and examples of best practice. After attending the meeting, she was satisfied that Warwickshire had the appropriate safeguards in place.

The Committee noted that the contributors to the final report had been varied and it had been extremely helpful for Cornelia Healy to have been present to outline the key areas and messages from the report.

Wendy Fabbro informed the Committee that she was working on a pilot to develop the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) and would be meeting with the Assistant Chief Constable of Warwickshire Police to determine how this area of work would progress. The formation of the MASH would be completed in a careful and considered way.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed:

- 1) To note the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board 2014.
- 2) That the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report be considered at a single item Select Committee meeting.
- 3) That a Task and Finish Group be established to consider the lessons learnt and outcomes of the pilot and to help shape any future direction of the MASH. The Task and Finish Group would likely begin its work in the New Year/the spring of 2015.

7. SEND Local Offer Consultation

The Committee received a verbal update from Hugh Disley, Head of Early Help and Targeted Support on the progress of the SEND Local Offer Consultation.

The Committee noted that representatives from education, health and social care were involved at all stages of the consultation. All parents had received the written information in relation to the consultation- a

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

freepost envelope was included with the enclosed questionnaire so that completed documents could be returned easily to the Council.

There were currently two parents sitting on the SEND Board. The key aim of the consultation was to work with families and community organisations in order that the right decisions were made when the needs of a family and child had been assessed, to ensure that the needs of all children were met. The consultation process also included foster carers and mainstream and special schools.

Young People's organisations were working together to capture the views and opinions of children aged 16+. Consultations were being conducted on a 1:1 basis within schools and colleges between young people and their immediate peers- these children were able to articulate to the Council what they required on a personal basis. The consultation process would end on 23rd November 2014.

The Committee commended the work of all involved with the consultation process.

Hugh Disley informed members that the consultation had taken place at a good time- it was giving the Council a clear picture of the needs of young people and meant that budgets could be allocated more resourcefully to meet the needs of young people. The SEND Local Offer would need to be open, fair and transparent across the entire county.

Members expressed the opinion that it was important to be receptive to external organisations and to work with and alongside them on consultations such as this one to achieve the best possible outcomes for the county's children and young people.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to note the verbal update on the progress of the SEND Local Offer Consultation

8. Children's Social Care Complaints

Karen Smith, Customer Relations Manager introduced the report and presented the Committee with the key themes emanating from it. She advised that Children's Social Care Complaints was a difficult and sensitive area of Council business- the Council always aimed to show compassion and understanding when looking into the public's concerns and complaints.

Karen Smith advised that it was always a top priority for the department to respond to complaints in timely fashion- keeping complainants fully

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

informed throughout the process. The Council always aimed to resolve a complaint within the formative stages in an attempt to avoid the complainant feeling that they needed to go through the entire, formal complaints procedure. The Committee expressed a view that the Council must always ensure that the correct processes are in place so that customers can access the information they require if they do wish to make a complaint. Karen Smith once again reassured members that all customers would be provided with the information they needed/requested with the aim that people would be satisfied with the initial response from the Council- negating the need or want to make a formal complaint.

Members were advised that there were currently low numbers of children and young people utilising the complaints process- the Council was undertaking work to find out why this was the case (95% of customers using the service were adults; either parents/carers or other members of the family). The Council was looking at ways of simplifying the complaints process- it could prove difficult within the current multi-agency environment for customers to know definitively, exactly who to contact in order to make a complaint.

At the present time, the Department for Education (DfE) were reviewing the complaints procedures, which the Council was monitoring to gauge possible implications.

The Committee noted that the Council did receive some excellent compliments from members of the public and from other agencies.

Looking in detail at the report, members were pleased that social workers were seen to be listening to the concerns of young people when they were expressed to them.

Wendy Fabbro informed the Committee that social workers were duty bound to complete a form to indicate that that a conversation had taken place with a young person in the absence of their parent/carer. This enabled young people to raise their concerns with a professional on a 1:1 basis. Currently, 95% of the completed forms indicated that these 1:1 conversations had taken place between a social worker and a young person.

The Committee was assured that processes within a governance system were in place to ensure social workers were fulfilling their duties. If a member of staff was found to be making a mistake or not fulfilling their duties correctly, then training and guidance would be provided to them.

The Committee requested additional clarification on the triaging of complaints. Karen Smith advised members that there was a statutory three stage process in operation. 96% of complaints were resolved

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

locally at stage one by operational managers, with 4% moving on to stage two. Only 2% of complaints were escalated to stage three. The Committee was further advised by Karen that when complaints cases were initially risk assessed, 25% of the cases were identified as requiring careful handling and support for a variety of reasons. Despite this, the majority of complaints submitted to the Council were dealt with locally at stage one, which demonstrated a commitment to resolve complex and sensitive issues as soon as possible.

All complaints were considered individually and were risk assessed. Complaints were only escalated to senior management if high levels of risk were identified during the initial stages of the complaints process. If complaints were received via an operational team or had perhaps been sent directly to a Head of Service, the receiver of the complaint was expected to undertake an initial risk triage. This was to ensure that any risks were identified as soon as possible and acted upon in a timely and correct manner.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed:

- 1) To support the 2014/2015 Customer Feedback Action Plan and remain mindful of the potential impact of anticipated changes in future service delivery on customer feedback performance.
- 2) That Wendy Fabbro would recirculate a Briefing Note that had previously been issued to members which highlighted an example of where a complaint had been escalated to stage three.

9. School Improvement and Performance

Nigel Minns introduced the report and drew members' attention to the vision of the Education and Learning Business Unit at 1.1 of the report. The Committee expressed a view that this was a good, aspirational vision.

The Committee was informed that the DfE was now expecting Councils to become more interventionist when dealing with underperforming schools. Once the Council had analysed the data of schools located within the county, it was expected that more warnings about potential and current underperforming schools will be confirmed.

Mr Minns informed the Committee that the Council remained legally responsible for the performance of schools (including academies). He also advised members that the Warwickshire School Improvement Policy had been improved significantly in order to meet the Council's statutory responsibilities and to meet the requirements of the Statutory

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

Guidance on Schools Causing Concern. Members were pleased that the Council still had a role in the scrutiny of schools.

There had been a significant increase in the number of Learning Improvement Officers working for the Council. However, they worked on an associate basis which meant they could be accommodated within the current budget.

There was still a split between the north and south of the county-overall, schools in the south were performing better than those in the north. All special schools in the county, bar one, had been rated as being 'good' or 'outstanding' by OFSTED. The School Improvement Board now provided evidence of initiatives that have been implemented in an attempt to get all schools to reach a 'good' or 'outstanding' rating.

A discussion took place regarding the significant challenges ahead to narrow the north, south divide in school performance and educational achievement. All members would embrace the vision outlined at 1.1 of the report. The School Improvement Consortia had also been refocused to achieve the vision of the Council and were required to adhere to this vision to justify the funding provided to them by the Council.

Nigel Minns informed members that underperforming schools were issued with a notice, requiring them to improve within two years of the notification being served. Mr Minns was confident that underperforming schools could be improved due to working closely with the Consortia and School Improvement Officers. Mr Minns' teams were not currently requesting additional resource to tackle the north, south divide, as recent figures within the report had shown that the divide was narrowing. There was capacity for an increase in the workforce should it be required.

Members formed the opinion that the Education Team were achieving good results with the resources available to them (like many departments, they had received a large cut in their funding).

The Committee were pleased that two schools in the north of the county had recently achieved an OFSTED 'outstanding' rating (Birchwood and the Polesworth school).

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee commented on the draft School Improvement Strategy and agreed to:

- 1) Endorse the proposed vision for education.
- 2) Note the current capacity of the School improvement team; and

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

3) Note the outcomes of inspections and the latest Ofsted judgements of Warwickshire schools.

10. Achievement of Warwickshire Children and Young People in National Tests in 2014

Nigel Minns introduced the report. Members noted that more detailed information around the GCSE outcomes would be made available in a report to the Committee at its meeting on 6th January 2015.

Nigel Minns informed the Committee that a sharp drop in GCSE results was expected nationally. As an early headline figure, members noted that the national pass rate was 56%, in Warwickshire the figure was 60%. On average, Warwickshire was 3% above its statistical neighbours. Progress in Warwickshire in English and maths achievement had been good- 73% of pupils achieved an A*-C grade. The national average stood at 69%.

Because of the way in which the data was presented and published by the DfE, the Committee found it difficult to judge if there had been a significant improvement in the county's GCSE performance. A suggestion was made by the Committee that in future, it would be useful for performance data to be presented by locality- it would then be easier to compare the results across the county. Mr Minns explained to members that it would now be more difficult for schools to meet their GCSE performance targets because of the way in which performance was measured by the DfE.

Within the early years results, Nigel Minns drew the Committee's attention to several points including:

- 1) Every district had seen an improvement in year 1 phonics.
- 2) Within Key Stage 1, improvements had been recorded in all areas of the county.
- 3) Pupils in Key Stage 2 were performing above the national average.
- 4) The performance of disadvantaged children had risen significantly, although the Council was committed to closing the results gap between the county's disadvantaged children compared to other pupils.

The Committee noted that the Vulnerable Learners Strategy would update members on how the Council was performing in terms of "narrowing the gap" between disadvantaged and other children. This report would be presented to the Committee's April 2015 meeting.

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1) Noted the performance of children and young people in Warwickshire schools in national tests.
- 2) Requested further detail on the achievements of children by locality.

11. Referral from the Regulatory Committee (Schools Places)

Steve Pendleton, Head of Vulnerable Groups and the Virtual School introduced the report and informed the Committee that because an alternative arrangement had not been made in a timely manner, one parent had been awarded compensation because their child had not been receiving an appropriate education.

For this academic year, the new Fair Access protocol had been operating successfully- there had been no delays in allocating a school place to vulnerable pupils. The Council had received positive feedback from its own schools and academies in relation to the implementation of the new protocol and all were complying with it.

The Committee agreed:

- 1) To note the report and to receive a further report in June 2015 to consider the effectiveness of the protocol over an extended period of time.
- 2) To respond to the Regulatory Committee that members were reassured that the new protocol which is now in place is working effectively and that the impact of the protocol will be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.

12. Area Behaviour Partnerships

Steve Pendleton introduced the report and made the Committee aware that the data contained within related to secondary schools only.

The Committee noted that there had been a lower percentage of permanent exclusions in Warwickshire during 2012/13 than in previous years. The four Area Behaviour Partnerships (ABPs) were having a positive impact, with schools now focusing on preventative measures before pupils had to be permanently excluded.

The Committee acknowledged that although it was good news that the number of pupils being permanently excluded had decreased, there

**Minutes of the meeting of the
Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee
held on 4 November 2014**

was a concern that disruptive pupils remaining within the classroom environment had the potential to affect the performance of other pupils within the classroom.

Members were pleased with the way in which funding was allocated to schools. Each institution had the flexibility to spend capital how they best saw fit to provide the best outcomes for their pupils.

The Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered the report and noted the update provided on the Four Area Behaviour Partnerships operating within Warwickshire.

13. Any Urgent Items

Elizabeth Abbott, Business Partner (Planning, Performance and Improvement) introduced the report which provided the Committee with an update on the One Organisational Plan (OOP) Quarter 1 performance. This report will be tabled at future meetings of the Committee.

Members of the Committee expressed concern regarding previous instances of underspends. Elizabeth Abbott advised that more details of potential future underspends would be included in OOP performance reports brought before the Committee.

14. Date of Next Meeting

The Committee noted that the next meeting had been scheduled for 6th January 2015, commencing 10.00am in Committee Room 2, Shire Hall, Warwick

The Committee rose at 2.00 p.m.

.....
Chair