

(2) Members Declarations of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

Members declared personal interests as set out below:

- (1) by virtue of them serving as District/Borough Councillors as follows:-

Councillor Jose Compton – Warwick District Council
Councillor Mike Perry – Stratford on Avon District Council
Councillor John Ross – Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council
Councillor Heather Timms – Rugby Borough Council

(3) Minutes of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 16 November 2006

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 16 November 2006 were agreed as a correct record with the following corrections:

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

Replace the words “a Voluntary Aided School (The Avon Valley School)” with the words “ Bishop Wulstan School and The Avon Valley School”.

Page 9 – 7.3 Admissions and Appeals Codes of Practice

Replace the words “the would” with the words “they would”.

Matters arising

There were no matters arising.

(4) Chair’s Announcements

The Chair asked that Councillors McCarthy, Ross and Kam Singh arrange a date with Michelle McHugh for the ICT Working Group to meet.

2. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

3. Presentation – Evidence Gathering for Young People and Alcohol

The Chair introduced the review noting that the presentations were the first of a series of programmed events to gather information, which would culminate in the summer 2007 in time to impact on the school

curriculum for September 2007. He added that the review was not diminishing the impact of drugs but that the Committee had agreed to concentrate on alcohol misuse by young people.

Lorna Ferguson and Will Johnson of DAAT gave presentations on the generic Warwickshire Alcohol Strategy and information specific to young people in Warwickshire (see slides attached).

During the ensuing discussion the following points were raised:

1. Statistical information was derived from the 2005 Regional Lifestyle Survey conducted across the West Midlands by the Department of Health and the West Midlands Public Health Observatory, Public Health services in Rugby and Nuneaton and Bedworth and through MORI polls.
2. Research carried out by Turning Point in 2006 showed that a child whose parents misused alcohol was also likely to develop alcohol dependence and related mental health and health issues.
3. Young people under the influence of alcohol were more likely to give in to peer pressure and accept drugs.
4. The youngest recorded alcohol related death was an 18 year-old boy who died of alcohol poisoning, but children as young as three have presented at A&E from alcohol misuse.
5. While there was no common practice across Warwickshire, there were several ways of stopping pubs and clubs selling to underage young people including prosecution, and the participation of licensees was key to harm reduction.
6. Reference was made to an alcohol harm reduction strategy carried out by Enfield Council (Society Guardian, 13 December 2006) and the statement that "local leadership has been key".
7. The issue of alcohol misuse had been on the agenda of schools for some time, but schools were not keen to label young people with alcohol or drugs and there was a need to focus on misuse and access and not to demonise parents.
8. Drug and alcohol misuse was divided into four categories – hazardous, harmful, dependent and severely dependent. There was no money available for education awareness, but the strategy was to deal with the first layer and education people from a very young age.
9. It was a requirement of Government to have a Performance Management Strategy in place, taking into account government requirements, local desirability's and funding issues, all linked into an implementation plan, with Community Protection as lead agency through DAAT and CDRPs and expected to be in place by May/June.
10. A data-setting meeting was scheduled for January 2007 to look at putting in place a data set, which met multi-agency needs.
11. The service would be hosting an event in January with all stakeholders to look at pathways into treatment.

Leena Pindoria, School Drug Adviser gave a presentation outlining the challenges faced by schools in tackling alcohol and young people (see slides attached).

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

- a. People should feel positive about young people and celebrate the healthy choices many make and look at the bigger picture.
- b. Schools needed to identify vulnerable individuals families and establish plans to support them.
- c. 34% of Warwickshire schools had received healthy school status, which included developing the knowledge and understanding of drugs (including alcohol).
- d. The Drug School Adviser role was part of a bigger health team working with young people.

The Chair thanked the speakers on behalf of the Committee.

4. Hear by Right

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families evaluating where the Directorate was with this initiative and to approve a process for implementation.

Hugh Disley noted that the Authority was starting from a position of strength with the building blocks in place and the report set out the way forward with a more strategic approach involving Members, all Directorates and young people.

Councillor Izzi Seccombe welcomed the enthusiasm of the Committee and Directorate and noted that there would be a need to identify and work with a large number of variable groups and a working group would enable the work to move forward. She added that while the Young Peoples Forum and Youth Parliament were feeding in well and beginning to make a difference to strategy, there were many other groups such as Young Carers who needed to have a voice.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were highlighted:

1. Hugh Disley would give Councillor Seccombe feedback on the progress of the working group and, where appropriate, include Councillor Seccombe in meetings.
2. The initiative would be fed through to other Directorates as an important part of all five outcomes of Every Child Matters.

Having considered the report, the Committee agreed to:

- (1) support the proposal that there be an audit of each Division's current position and plans are then drawn up towards establishing the Warwickshire Award for Involvement with a view to progressing towards the Hear by Right National Standard.

- (2) form a small working group (one Councillor from each Group and a non-Councillor member of the Committee) with key officers to oversee and support these plans.
- (3) receive a quarterly report on progress towards the Hear by Right standard.

5. Progress report on outstanding items from the Action Plan arising from the Ofsted Inspection of Youth Services May 2005

Members considered the Report of the Strategic Director for Children, Families and Young People updating Members on progress against the outstanding items of the action plan presented to Committee on September 14th 2006 and identifying progress against the Widening Participation and Rural Youth Work developments.

Peter Hatcher made the following points:

- i. The Council had allocated an annual sum of £130,00 to offset the Ofsted Action Plan, which had been used for the first year for capital outlay and would be used next year for revenue including staffing and resources.
- ii. The service were progressing well in all areas reported as requiring work in the report in September:
 - 11-12% of young people worked with were of BEM background and it was stated that there had not been insufficient prioritisation of inclusion and diversity and this would be reported separately in future.
 - There had been staffing issues related to work with young people with disabilities which had since been sorted out and it was expected that an Implementation Strategy would be in place by April 2007.
- iii. It was reported that a meeting had taken place with Connexions to assist with a further bid for Leonardo at the end of March.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

1. Members welcomed the detail provided in the report, particularly financial details.
2. It was noted that the service was for all young people and while it covered very large areas and could not meet all needs, it did give capacity to improve what was already being done.
3. There were still places where young people were not given access such as village halls and Members were urged to support the inclusion of young people wherever appropriate.
4. Members acknowledged the importance of volunteers within communities and as crucial to exiting strategies in rural situations and were urged to continue to build their relationship with the sector, particularly those groups dealing with morality and disability.
5. Differences in staff levels in the north and south was partly historic and staff were based mainly around population and

youth centres. It was noted that Stratford and Warwick had a tradition of volunteering.

6. The biggest issues for reaching young people with disabilities were integration and accessibility and breaking down boundaries. The service worked closely with colleagues to solve transport problems.
7. There was a steering group in place who were responsible for ensuring that vehicles remained a county resource and available for use by all young people.
8. In relation to alcohol and young people, the youth service had specific targets where they were required to engage with at least 25 young people in educational programmes.

The Committee noted the progress against the outstanding actions identified by this Committee following the presentation of the action plan at the previous meeting and requested a further report in 12 months to scrutinise the aspirations and progress of the Action Plan, including reasons where areas had gone well or not.

6. Recommendations of the Complaints Working Group

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Performance and Development summarising the recommendations of the Complaints Working Group, established by the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise how Councillors could be involved in the Social Care and representations complaints process.

The Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee endorsed the following recommendations of the Complaints Working Group as outlined in section 3 of the report:

1. A Task and Finish Panel should be established by the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee to meet on a regular basis to scrutinise complaints related to the Children, Young People and Families Directorate.
2. The membership of the Task and Finish Panel should include Councillors from each political group (to be confirmed by Party Spokespersons) and one parent governor representative from the Committee.
3. The members of the Panel will receive quarterly analysis of stage 2 and stage 3 social care complaints, and stage 3 education complaints via email.
4. The Task and Finish Panel should report back to the Committee on trends or areas for further scrutiny if an issue is recurrent or significant to warrant in-depth scrutiny by the Committee.

5. The Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee receive annual and half year complaints and compliments reports via email and raise any issues with a member of the Task and Finish Panel
6. The panel should explore
 - i) how trends in schools complaints resolved at stage 2 can be identified and
 - ii) how Councillors can be informed of re-occurring social care complaints that are resolved at stage 1.
7. The Task and Finish Panel should be established for a period of 12 months, after which the Panel should report back to the committee providing details of the work undertaken and outlining the advantages and disadvantages of continuing with this approach.

7. Provisional Items for Future Meetings and Forward Plan Items Relevant to the Work of this Committee

The Committee noted the Provisional Items for Future Meetings and Forward Plan Items relevant to the work of this Committee.

Michelle McHugh agreed to notify the Committee on progress in terms of scrutinising bullying.

8. Any Other Items

None.

The Chair wished everyone a Happy Christmas, Seasons Greetings and all the best for the New Year. He reminded the Committee that a special meeting to look at Alcohol and Young People was scheduled to take place on Monday, 15 January 2007 at 2.00 pm.

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Chair

The Committee rose at 12.30 p.m.