

Minutes of the Meeting of the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 25 April 2007

Present:-

Members of the Committee	Councillor Jose Compton “ Jill Dill-Russell “ Richard Grant “ John Haynes (replacing Councillor Katherine King for this meeting) “ Helen McCarthy “ Mike Perry “ John Ross “ Kam Singh “ Mota Singh “ Heather Timms “ John Wells “ John Whitehouse
Parent Governor Representative	Nick Lambert
Teacher Representative	Max Hyde
Other County Councillors	Councillor John Burton (Schools) Councillor Izzi Seccombe (Children, Young People & Families)
Invited Guests	Claire Sangster Chris Smart
Officers	Hugh Disley, Head of Service – Division for Young People Mark Gore, Head of Service – Education Partnerships and School Development Liz Holt, Assistant Head of Service – SEN and Inclusion Antony Hopker, Communications Officer – News & Public Affairs Ann Mawdsley, Senior Committee Administrator Michelle McHugh, Scrutiny Officer Nick Williams, Education Officer
Also Attending	Inspector Faz Chisty, Warwickshire Police Joanne Sheehy – Warwickshire Police, Youth and Schools Liaison Officer

1. General

(1) Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Rev Terry Hum, Councillor Katherine King, Dr Rex Pogson and Linda Wainscot.

(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, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings held on 14 December 2006, 15 January 2007 and 6 March 2007

The minutes of the meetings of the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 December 2006 and 6 March 2007 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

The minutes of the meeting of the Children, Young People and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15 January 2007 were agreed with the following corrections:

Page 4. paragraph h. – the words “their own” to be inserted before the word “children” on the first line.

Page 5 – paragraph 10. – The last sentence to read “It was noted that the quality of service for victims of anti-social behaviour had improved.”

Matters arising

15 January 2007 – Page 5. – paragraph 8 – It was noted that Members needed to bear in mind the question of the relationship between Connexions and schools when discussing their final report.

6 March 2007 – Stuart Gealy – The Chair recalled that Stuart Gealy had raised the issue of test purchasing and noted that a

meeting had been scheduled between himself, Trading Standards' officers and the Chair of the Community Protection Overview and Scrutiny Committee to look at the links.

(4) Chair's Announcements

1. The Chair drew the attention of the Committee to the SACRE Annual Report that they had all received. He paid tribute to the work done by SACRE in bringing together people of different faiths and beliefs to move the SACRE agenda forward and ensure young people in Warwickshire received a good quality education.
2. The Chair noted the promising and encouraging Inspection Reports received on Adoption and Fostering Services in Warwickshire, which would be circulated to Members of the Committee by e-mail. He added that Action Plans from the reports could be considered by the Committee at a later date and any issues needed to be raised through the Groups Spokespersons.
3. The Chair noted that the Annual Report would be reported to Council on 15 May. He added his gratitude to Michelle McHugh for the work she had done on the report.

2. Public Question Time

There were no public questions.

3. Presentation – Evidence Gathering for Young People and Alcohol

The Chair introduced Joanne Sheehy, Youth and Schools Liaison Officer of the Warwickshire Police to the meeting.

Joanne Sheehy gave a presentation on the Safer Schools Partnership, which had been launched in September 2002 and was a new, multi-agency approach to police involvement in schools. She added the following points:

- i. The pilot was being carried out in Nuneaton and Bedworth and Joanne Sheehy was working with five secondary schools, 19 Primary schools (which are the feeder schools for those secondary schools) and the PRU, delivering crime prevention and safety education.
- ii. Safety education on alcohol and drugs was covered in a single lesson.
- iii. Secondary school pupils worked through the "Watch Over Me Too" interactive soap opera with their teachers and then Joanne, and also covered the law in terms of information and consequences of actions.

- iv. Primary school pupils worked with the “Miss Dorothy” pilot and participated in-group work with small groups selecting and discussing a drug, which could be alcohol.
- v. The funding for the partnership would end in October 2007 and in anticipation of this a working group had been established to evaluate the role before making recommendations to the partnership organisations.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were raised:

- 1. Young people had completed a questionnaire before and after the lesson in Internet safety, which showed a big impact from the lesson.
- 2. The impact on children and young people would be considered during the evaluation, as well as the funding to continue the post and options to roll the pilot out to other areas.
- 3. Local ownership of these issues was important, and the partnership and the Safer Neighbourhoods Initiative complemented each other and the aim was to have trained people working in schools, supported by the Safer Neighbourhoods teams
- 4. Joanne Sheehy was a dedicated resource to the schools involved in the pilot, but elsewhere in the county police worked with schools on an ad hoc basis and there was a need to ensure that the message being delivered across the county was consistent. Members agreed the need for a good relationship to be developed between schools and the Police.
- 5. Criminal damage was a consistent problem in schools and a resource to use within schools tackling this issue was being sought. Other needs were often local to individual schools and included areas such as football violence and knives.
- 6. Race and hate crimes were touched on within the lesson on bullying, which was less of an issue in primary schools.
- 7. There was a need for a debate to be held by partners, including the Police, Fire Service, County Council and Road Safety Partnership to improve co-ordination and decide on a joint agenda, resources and how best to move forward. This could be through a central co-ordinator with dedicated staff in each area working with schools picked locally.
- 8. Members agreed there was a need to gather evidence on the challenging interfaces between police and young people with alcohol on the streets and what the real issue were. Inspector Chisty added that Spencer Payne, Community Safety Information Analyst, would be able to provide a snapshot of hot spots, which would be useful to feed into the process.
- 9. Local PCSOs could identify young people who had voluntarily signed Acceptable Behaviour Contracts who continued to be involved with crime and anti-social behaviour, and would notify Joanne Sheehy, who would organise emergency meetings with the school, parents and young person, and give extra support

where possible. Work was also done with partners such as the Youth Offending Team and Positive About Young People.

10. There was a need to have the same message and standards across the county with children and young people learning about the impact and consequences of the action they took, especially where alcohol was involved. This was tied in to the respect agenda and for young people to learn from people they respected.
11. There was evidence that where activities were provided for young people the impact could be dramatic, but it was about giving young people choices to of suitable activities they chose to take part in. Joanne added that where activities were provided there was a likelihood that young people would still drink either before or after.

The Chair thanked Joanne Sheehy and Inspector Faz Chisty on behalf of the Committee.

4. In Year Fair Access Protocol

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Families summarising the proposed arrangements for the admission of 'Hard to Place' pupils as required by the DfES.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were highlighted:

1. It was recognised that all schools were obliged to sign up to the Protocol, or have a DfES protocol imposed on them, but Members noted their concern that some schools may not. There was a need to ensure that all schools and the Area Behaviour Panels signed up to the Protocol and put it into practice.
2. Infant class size legislation would override the protocol and would not exceed 30 children.
3. It was noted that, although the documents had been sent to all schools, Governing Bodies had not been consulted directly and Members agreed that consultation documents should be addressed to Headteachers and Governing Bodies.
4. It was agreed that the Protocol should be reviewed in terms of the categories of pupils to be covered by the protocol, particularly children who are carers, children with SEN and children with disabilities.
5. The revised Code of Practice re-enforced the role of Local Authorities as champions of families and this needed to be robust. This included the need to ensure that all schools took their fair share of 'hard to place' pupils, and these pupils were not all placed in schools with capacity who were already in challenging circumstances to ensure the best deal for all students.

6. Members noted the need for the review of the funding formula to include the feasibility of additional funding in support of 'hard to place' pupils.
7. The County Behaviour Panel were considering issues such as the weighted system and points mechanism and whether limits should be set to avoid large numbers of pupils being moved around within this Protocol.
8. The Protocol sought to support networks already in place and was expected to support earlier intervention. Schools had sought clarification on how the networks all knitted together.
9. The Committee agreed that the Protocol was a working document, which should be redrafted for submission to Cabinet. The Protocol should make allowance for the Cabinet Member and Spokespersons to be regularly informed of the progress of the policy and a further update report brought to the Committee in 12 months.

The Committee endorsed the In Year Fair Access Protocol.

5. Youth Work Development Grants/Former Area Community Education Councils – funding arrangements

Members considered the Report of the Strategic Director for Children, Families and Young People seeking Members' views on agreeing a way forward following the Cabinet (7.12.06) decision to refer this item to Overview and Scrutiny and seeking support from Members for the Youth Work Development Grants proposal, as an alternative to the previous allocation process using the residue monies from the former Area Community Education Councils relating to funds used to support work with 0-19 year olds.

The Chair noted that the report addressed the main concerns of the Cabinet and the recommendations had general agreement amongst Area Committee Chairs.

During the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

1. The quarterly meetings to consider allocation of funds would be held before Area Committees to ensure decisions did not take a long time.
2. The Area Committee would be responsible for ensuring that the six young people were representative of the geographical spread.
3. It was agreed that there was a need to be a link between the grants and service agreements. Hugh Disley added that the new arrangements gave a three-year commitment, which allowed voluntary organisations to start to plan ahead, and an annual group would meet to look at progress.

4. The Area Youth Managers would be involved with the groups in an advisory capacity, with the Area Committees having final responsibility for allocating the funding.

The Committee agreed to:

- (1) recommend to Cabinet that the Youth Work Development Grants proposal is implemented from April 2007 as an alternative to the previous process using the residue monies from the former Area Community Education Councils.
- (2) Recommend that the formula used in 2006/07 is adopted, allocating the amounts each district receives and ensuring that the ratios per district remain constant.

6. 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.

7. Any Other Items

None.

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Chair

The Committee rose at 12.25 p.m.