

Public Document Pack  
**Notice of a Meeting**

**Children's Services Scrutiny Committee**  
**Tuesday, 22 September 2009 at 10.00 am**  
**County Hall**

**Membership**

Chairman - Councillor Ann Bonner  
Deputy Chairman – Councillor Neil Owen

**Councillors:** M. Altaf- Anda Fitzgerald- Tony HarbourDav  
KhanMarilyn Badcoc O'ConnorJanet GoddenPet e SexonVal Smith  
kRoger Belson e Handley

**Co-optees:** Chris Bevan Hajjat Ramzy Sue Matthew

**Notes:** **Date of next meeting: 5 November 2009**

**What does this Committee review or scrutinise?**

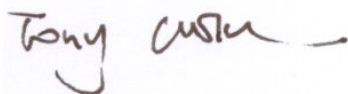
- Services for children, young people and families; preventative services; child protection; family support, educational policy; youth service; youth justice; Primary & secondary schools; special education; pupil services; school transport; music service

**How can I have my say?**

We welcome the views of the community on any issues in relation to the responsibilities of this Committee. Members of the public may ask to speak on any item on the agenda or may suggest matters which they would like the Committee to look at. **Requests to speak must be submitted to the Committee Officer below no later than 9 am on the working day before the date of the meeting.**

For more information about this Committee please contact:

Chairman - Councillor Ann Bonner  
E.Mail:  
Committee Officer - **Julie Dean**



Tony Cloke  
Assistant Head of Legal & Democratic Services

September 2009

## **About the County Council**

The Oxfordshire County Council is made up of 74 councillors who are democratically elected every four years. The Council provides a range of services to Oxfordshire's 630,000 residents. These include:

schools	social & health care	libraries and museums
the fire service	roads	trading standards
land use	transport planning	waste management

Each year the Council manages £0.9 billion of public money in providing these services. Most decisions are taken by a Cabinet of 10 Councillors, which makes decisions about service priorities and spending. Some decisions will now be delegated to individual members of the Cabinet.

## **About Scrutiny**

Scrutiny is about:

- Providing a challenge to the Cabinet
- Examining how well the Cabinet and the Authority are performing
- Influencing the Cabinet on decisions that affect local people
- Helping the Cabinet to develop Council policies
- Representing the community in Council decision making
- Promoting joined up working across the authority's work and with partners

Scrutiny is NOT about:

- Making day to day service decisions
- Investigating individual complaints.

## **What does this Committee do?**

The Committee meets up to 6 times a year or more. It develops a work programme, which lists the issues it plans to investigate. These investigations can include whole committee investigations undertaken during the meeting, or reviews by a panel of members doing research and talking to lots of people outside of the meeting. Once an investigation is completed the Committee provides its advice to the Cabinet, the full Council or other scrutiny committees. Meetings are open to the public and all reports are available to the public unless exempt or confidential, when the items would be considered in closed session

**If you have any special requirements (such as a large print version of these papers or special access facilities) please contact the officer named on the front page, giving as much notice as possible before the meeting**

**A hearing loop is available at County Hall.**

## AGENDA

**1. Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**

**2. Declarations of Interest - see guidance note**

**3. Minutes (Pages 1 - 8)**

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 14 July (**CH3**) and to note for information any matters arising on them.

**4. Speaking to or petitioning the Committee**

**5. Oxfordshire Youth Services (Pages 9 - 14)**  
**10.10 am**

Ofsted Report

To receive a presentation from Tan Lea, Head of Oxfordshire Youth Service, with regard to the outcomes of the recent inspection by Ofsted into the impact of Integrated Youth Support.

**6. Reducing Teenage Conceptions Working Group - Update**  
**10.50 am**

To receive a progress report on the activity of the Working Group.

**7. Educational Attainment Task Group**  
**11.00 am**

To receive for approval the scoping document (**CH**) from the newly appointed Educational Attainment Task Group.

**8. Proposed Work Programme (Pages 15 - 26)**  
**11.05 am**

Following discussion at the last meeting to consider the attached proposal forms (**CH**).

**9. Forward Plan**

The Committee is asked to suggest items from the current Forward Plan on which it may wish to have an opportunity to offer advice to the Cabinet before any decision is taken, together with details of what it thinks could be achieved by looking at any items.

A current copy of the Forward Plan can be found on the Council's website:

[http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/publicnet/council\\_services/about\\_your\\_council/decision\\_making/current\\_forwardplan140909.pdf](http://portal.oxfordshire.gov.uk/content/publicnet/council_services/about_your_council/decision_making/current_forwardplan140909.pdf)

## 12.20 pm Close of meeting

### Declarations of Interest

This note briefly summarises the position on interests which you must declare at the meeting. Please refer to the Members' Code of Conduct in Section DD of the Constitution for a fuller description.

#### The duty to declare ...

You must always declare any "personal interest" in a matter under consideration, ie where the matter affects (either positively or negatively):

- (i) any of the financial and other interests which you are required to notify for inclusion in the statutory Register of Members' Interests; or
- (ii) your own well-being or financial position or that of any member of your family or any person with whom you have a close association more than it would affect other people in the County.

#### Whose interests are included ...

"Member of your family" in (ii) above includes spouses and partners and other relatives' spouses and partners, and extends to the employment and investment interests of relatives and friends and their involvement in other bodies of various descriptions. For a full list of what "relative" covers, please see the Code of Conduct.

#### When and what to declare ...

The best time to make any declaration is under the agenda item "Declarations of Interest". Under the Code you must declare not later than at the start of the item concerned or (if different) as soon as the interest "becomes apparent".

In making a declaration you must state the nature of the interest.

#### Taking part if you have an interest ...

Having made a declaration you may still take part in the debate and vote on the matter unless your personal interest is also a "prejudicial" interest.

#### "Prejudicial" interests ...

A prejudicial interest is one which a member of the public knowing the relevant facts would think so significant as to be likely to affect your judgment of the public interest.

#### What to do if your interest is prejudicial ...

If you have a prejudicial interest in any matter under consideration, you may remain in the room but only for the purpose of making representations, answering questions or giving evidence relating to the matter under consideration, provided that the public are also allowed to attend the meeting for the same purpose, whether under a statutory right or otherwise.

#### Exceptions ...

There are a few circumstances where you may regard yourself as not having a prejudicial interest or may participate even though you may have one. These, together with other rules about participation in the case of a prejudicial interest, are set out in paragraphs 10 – 12 of the Code.

#### Seeking Advice ...

It is your responsibility to decide whether any of these provisions apply to you in particular circumstances, but you may wish to seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the meeting.

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## ITEM CH3

### CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on 14 July 2009 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.15 pm

**Present:**

**Voting Members:**

Councillor Ann Bonner - in the chair

Councillor Mohammed Altaf-Khan

Councillor Roger Belson

Councillor Anda Fitzgerald -O'Connor

Councillor Janet Godden

Councillor Tony Harbour

Councillor Steve Hayward (in place of Councillor Pete Handley)

Councillor Neil Owen

Councillor Dave Sexon

Councillor Val Smith

Councillor Lawrie Stratford (in place of Councillor Marilyn Badcock)

Mr Chris Bevan

Mrs Sue Matthew

Dr Hojjat Ramzy (Ramezanzadeh)

**By Invitation:**

Councillors Michael Waine and Louise Chapman, Cabinet Members for Schools Improvement and Children, Young People & Families, respectively (all items).

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting: J. Dean and L. Michelson (Corporate Core).

Part of meeting:

**Agenda Item**

**Officer Attending**

5

Lucy Russell, Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator, Oxfordshire County Council/Oxfordshire Primary Care Trust

6

Paula Tansley, Interim Head of Commissioning, Performance & Quality Assurance, Children, Young People & Families

*The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports are attached to the signed Minutes.*

## 19/09 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS

Apologies for absence and temporary appointments were received as follows:

### Apology from

Councillor Marilyn Badcock  
Councillor Pete Handley

### Temporary Appointments

Councillor Lawrie Stratford  
Councillor Steve Hayward

## 20/09 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 18 March 2009 and 16 June 2009 were approved and signed subject to the inclusion of Carole Thomson into the list of attendees at the 18 March meeting.

## 21/09 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

(Agenda Item 5)

### Reducing Teenage Conceptions in Oxfordshire

On 18 March, the Scrutiny Committee had received an interim report outlining the findings of the confidential Inquiry into teenage conceptions in Oxfordshire, held in July 2008. The Inquiry was held by Janet Tomlinson, Director of Children, Young People & Families, and Dr Jonathan McWilliam, Director of Public Health for Oxfordshire. It identified a series of recommendations for action to improve the strategy to reduce teenage pregnancies. In April 2009, the confidential Inquiry had reviewed progress made since the original report in 2008.

The Committee had before them a report (CH5) which updated members on the latest position and which outlined action that had been taken since the original review.

The Committee had invited Lucy Russell, Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator, to attend the meeting in order to respond to questions. Members of the Committee asked a number of questions, a selection of which is included below, and received the following summarised responses:

- Q Talks with young people in Children's Centres has revealed that discussion with peer groups is often more meaningful than discussions with professionals. What are you doing about this?
- R We are aware that we need to improve in this area and we are therefore investing a significant amount of time right across the board in Personal, Social & Health (PSE) education, looking at ways to make discussion about various issues more meaningful to



young people. We are also keen to introduce new things out of term time too.

Q What are you doing about reducing and targeting services at second teenage conceptions? Young people like continuity.

R It is recognised that young people do like continuity and this is brought to them in the form of the school health nurses. When possible, they see the same nurse each time.

The Committee noted that there had been a misconception of the texting service on the part of the media. It was not about texting for the contraceptive pill, rather, it was intended as one of the ways for an individual to make contact with an experienced school health nurse with reference to their physical, mental and sexual health. It was not a new service, but an existing school health, nurse service in Oxfordshire's secondary schools which, until now, had not been available over the school holidays.

Q Are you going to clarify the statistics into age groups?

R We will try to introduce it in the future.

Q Have you looked into involving theology in sex education?

R If the facts are presented as facts and in a context which young people can understand, it can result in a useful and positive process. Whoever is presenting it, and in whatever context, it is about making sure that pupils are given the correct information.

Q Are you taking steps to encourage schools and FE colleges to improve their data collection?

R Always, when collecting this type of data, there is a time lag. A pregnancy might not go to full term, for example. Data is collected nationally by the Government so that at least we are able to monitor the impact of what action we are taking. We have the data relating to how many young mothers there are in the county, of which there are 350. Some of these are in education and training establishments, some are not. We are taking positive, speedy action to engage more of the latter group into a variety of different courses as soon as possible.

Q Are you also working with boys? How do you measure effectiveness?

R Yes, we are also working with boys. We have a specialist targeting the needs of boys also. At the moment we carry out evaluation via PSE sexual health training. We also organise focus groups with select groups of girls and boys to ask their views about the training they received and to measure the training they

received. We also measure how many young men have become fathers. We are keen to keep a focus on boys. In addition, the Integrated Youth Support Services are making the education of young mothers a target – we shall be keen to see its impact.

Q Do you make very young mothers aware of the possible impact on their bodies of having babies when so young?

R Yes we do. We must continue to make sure that we are having an effect and that they are receiving the correct information in order that they can make informed decisions.

Q How do you publicise your services?

R An organisation called SHADE will provide health advice in the form of drop in for every young person during school holidays. Business cards will be produced to promote its services. This service will be evaluated and if it is felt that the service is not being publicised sufficiently, we will look at new methods and find the right people to do this.

Q How are you sharing good practice around all the secondary schools?

R There will be a conference to share good practice in relation to Health Education in the autumn.

Views expressed by various members of the Committee included the following:

- Prevention is the key word. The question should be asked if the message to young fathers is firm enough;
- The important thing is for young mothers to continue with their education. Children's Centres are positive about this and do encourage them to undertake courses, as long as they have support.

The Committee noted a report by Councillor Waine who pointed out that the Oxfordshire Youth Parliament had met recently and had discussed sexual health matters. He added that they had very clear messages to put forward and had communicated these in a strong manner. The issues which they had put forward were as follows:

- There was still a requirement for very clear signposting for young people;
- There was also a requirement for clear rules of engagement – amongst these, there was a need to be open and to have clear boundaries;

- If they wished to consult on a 'one-off' issue, then there was a need to be seen speedily and to have access to a person who was qualified in that particular area. If it proved to be an ongoing problem, then there was a need for continuity;
- Extended pastoral support was far stronger in schools and the sixth forms than in FE colleges;
- Oxfordshire was strong on peer support and peer counselling.

At this point members of the Committee thanked Lucy Russell, Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Co-ordinator, for her presentation and for making herself available, together with Councillors Waine and Chapman, to respond to questions.

It was **AGREED** that:

- (a) Councillor Anda Fitzgerald O'Connor and Dr Ramzy would form a joint working group, together with volunteers from the Oxfordshire Joint Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee, to take this forward; and
- (b) Councillor David Turner, a former member of this Committee and a member of this Committee and a member of the Teenage Conception Advisory Board would also be invited to take part also

## **22/09 ANNUAL SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME JULY 2009 – JULY 2010**

(Agenda Item 6)

Lisa Michelson, the Committee's Corporate Performance & Review Officer for the Children, Young People & Families area, introduced this item giving a brief explanation of the scrutiny work processes. She asked the Committee to consider items which they might like to see included within the Committee's Work Programme for 2009 – 2010. She added that any suggestions would then be worked up as proposals during the summer by the Corporate Performance & Review Team, and a report submitted to the 22 September meeting for decision.

The Committee were also asked to:

- (a) reform the Educational Attainment working group, and establish the course for further review.
- (b) consider an offer for a joint review on Youth Services with Oxford City Council .

Following this, and as a preliminary to a discussion by the Committee around its work programme, Paula Tansley, Interim Head of Commissioning, Performance & Quality Assurance, gave a presentation on the key challenges and priorities facing the County Council in this area of work for the period 2009/10, a summary of which is attached to the signed minutes.

The Cabinet members for Children, Young People & Families and Schools Improvement, respectively, were also present at the table in order to respond to any questions from the Committee.

Following a full discussion, members of the Committee thanked Paula Tansley and Councillors Waine and Chapman and **AGREED** to

(a) to bring the following issues for possible review back to the next meeting for discussion and prioritisation:

- SUCCESS Project (Q&A session);
- Operation and outcomes to date of the Oxfordshire Children's Trust;
- Children's Centres;
- Teaching of Religious Education in Schools;
- The effects of the dissolution of the Learning & Skills Council (for possible consideration later in the Council year);
- How to reduce permanent school exclusions within the county;
- Why parents remove children from Oxfordshire's state education system at age 11;
- The impact on the service of more children moving from the private sector to the state sector as a result of the recession;
- The extent of the interface between Oxfordshire schools and the County's science base;
- Implications of the reduction of central service resources on schools in Oxfordshire;
- Entitlement to entry to non faith schools in areas which only offer faith schools;
- Oxfordshire's Anti-Bullying Strategy;
- Are we in Oxfordshire preparing our young people for their transition into employment?

(b) To appoint Councillor Val Smith, Mohammed Altaf-Khan, Janet Godden and Dave Sexon, together with co-opted member Sue Matthew, to a newly formed Educational Attainment Review working group;

(c) Await an upcoming Ofsted report into Oxfordshire's Youth service before furthering discussion on a joint review; .

(d) Request the Cabinet members and the Directorate to bring the 'Directorate Priorities for 2009/10' list to the 23 February 2010 meeting in order to monitor progress.

Councillor Chapman undertook to send to each member of the Committee a copy of the consultation paper in relation to the proposed changes to Oxfordshire's Youth Service.

**23/09 LEAD MEMBER/TASK GROUP REPORTS**  
(Agenda Item 7)

Members noted the following tracking report from 21 April 2009 Cabinet with regard to Educational Attainment – Module 1

Relationship Between Leadership And Improving Attainment In Schools

The Cabinet considered a report by the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee (CA8) setting out the findings of a review that considered whether anything specific could be done to raise attainment in Oxfordshire's schools to the level that is expected of them. The report addressed the subject of how the leadership of a school, including the Governing Body, headteacher, deputy head, supporting management team and the Governing Body, could affect attainment levels. The Cabinet also considered the response of the Cabinet Member for School's Improvement.

Councillor Sue Haffenden, Lead Member of the Review introduced the report, setting out the background and referring to the delays in the work due to shortages in staff resources. The Review had been a small focussed review that had sought to avoid duplication with officer work that was underway. She referred to the recommendations and in particular highlighted those in relation to the central list of businesses willing to be involved with schools, the concept of federation.

Councillor Val Smith, Review Member, expressed the hope that the three remaining elements of the review could be undertaken.

Councillor David Turner, Shadow Cabinet Member for School's Improvement referred to a booklet on governorship produced by Martin Pounce and asked that consideration be given to supplying each governing body with a single copy.

The Cabinet Member for Schools Improvement thanked the Lead Member of the Review and fellow review members for their efforts. In response to comments made he noted that federation was being discussed as recommended in recommendation 11; it was not the role of SIP's to interpret their school's performance data; and he would take up the question of the booklet with Governor Services.

**24/09 FORWARD PLAN**  
(Agenda Item 8)

The Committee was asked to suggest items from the current Forward Plan on which it might have wished to have an opportunity to offer advice to the Cabinet before any decision was taken.

Councillor Stratford suggested that the report entitled 'The Protection of Children: A progress report' written by Lord Laming, be taken to the 22 September meeting of this Committee for comment prior to consideration by Cabinet.

NB. The above report has since been submitted to the 21 July Cabinet.

.....in the Chair

Date of signing.....2009

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10 July 2009

Ms Janet Tomlinson  
Director Children, Young People and  
Families  
Oxfordshire County Council  
Macclesfield House  
New Road  
Oxford  
Oxfordshire

Dear Ms Tomlinson

**Ofsted survey inspection programme 2009/10:  
The impact of integrated youth support**

Thank you for your co-operation and hospitality, and that of the staff, during our visit to Oxfordshire 23 - 25 June to evaluate the impact of integrated youth support. The visit provided valuable information which will contribute to our national evaluation and reporting.

The published report will list the names of the contributing local authorities and we may feature individual case studies. Where this is the case we will consult with the respective local authorities. This letter will not be posted on the Ofsted website.

The evidence used to inform the judgements made included interviews with officers and staff, visits to various projects, focus groups with partner agencies and scrutiny of documentation.

**The impact of integrated arrangements on the range and quality of young people's learning and development through participation in youth work and positive activities in the community is good.**

- The integrated youth support service is having a positive impact on young people's learning and development. Through participation in youth work and community based provision, young people enjoy constructive educational and leisure-time activities and have safe places to socialise with friends. Vulnerable young people are well supported to access opportunities through the Positive Activities for Young People programme.

- Integrated youth support arrangements are building effectively on the wide range of opportunities for young people to become volunteers and active citizens. Good support from front-line staff spurs young people to engage in activities and projects, often beyond their initial point of contact with the service.
- Strong and effective partnerships are in place with district councils and voluntary youth organisations. While many of these links pre-date the new service, integration has been a catalyst to review and revise partnership arrangements and service level agreements.
- The 'Oxfordshire Youth Offer' has recently been updated following consultation with young people. Partners recognise the need to continue to improve publicity and promotion, for example through the dedicated website and stronger links with extended schools.
- Access to affordable transport remains a barrier for young people in rural areas. The service continues to pursue discussions with local transport companies and support young people's campaigns for improvement.

**The effectiveness of targeted support services, particularly in relation to young people involved in, or at risk of involvement in, crime and anti-social behaviour is good.**

- Taken together, targeted services provide good support to young people. Practice is building effectively on previous arrangements. A high priority is given to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour as part of the council's prevention and early intervention work.
- Young people at risk of offending are identified early and individualised packages of support put in place. Offending rates are low and have declined consistently over the last three years. Data show a significant decline in anti-social behaviour in 'hot spot' communities. Very good partnership work with the police has been successful in diverting young people from the youth justice system.
- A new strategic lead for integrated youth support and an area service manager for targeted youth support have been appointed. A multi-agency group has good oversight of county developments. Improved information sharing is enabling risk factors, such as mental health and problematic behaviour in school, to be identified promptly. Electronic information sharing systems are not yet compatible across different agencies.
- Targeted youth support plays a key role in strands of the Success Project. Through the Back on Track Programme which works with targeted secondary schools, the service provides accredited outdoor activities which motivate young people and develop their skills and confidence. Young people are well supported by youth workers,



however, while they are on the programme, support from their schools is mixed.

- Data are used well to target resources.
- The service has been successful in reducing the numbers of young people whose circumstances are not known. However the proportion not in education, employment or training has begun to rise. The contract with Connexions has been revised to ensure a sharper focus on vulnerable groups. Actions to reduce teenage conceptions have not yet had sufficient or sustained impact. A new strategy has been put in place to focus work in the areas of greatest need.
- A recent internal review of targeted youth support has rightly identified the need to ensure evaluation captures broader outcomes for young people beyond measures such as offending, school attendance and unemployment.

**The progress made by the local authority and its partners in developing an integrated approach to youth support is satisfactory.**

- The new senior management team has a unified leadership 'voice' which reflects its clear and shared ambitions. Senior managers have well defined roles and responsibilities and clear lines of accountability. Good use is made of management information to inform planning.
- A well conceived and well written strategy is in place which recognises the contribution of different professional disciplines within the integrated service. However the strategy has not been communicated fully to staff at operational level. Some workers remain uncertain about the future and concerned about the security of their roles. While many are positive about the new developments, few have had the opportunity to influence strategic decision-making. Area delivery teams and plans for co-location are at a very early stage of development.
- Quality improvement arrangements are insufficiently developed. The service lacks a coherent quality assurance framework which includes systematic feedback from services users.
- The quality of resources is adequate overall. However, a legacy of underinvestment is evident in the poor state of many youth centres. The draft building strategy highlights the significant investment required to achieve standards more in keeping with the service's aspirations. At local level, staff and partners are resourceful in making the most of what is available. However, in some cases, long-term planning is hampered by the uncertainty of future funding.

**Young people's active involvement in shaping decisions at a local level is good.**

- Comprehensive arrangements to consult young people and engage them in decision making are in place. Good efforts are made to ensure young people from vulnerable groups are well represented. Young people have played an important role in the development of commissioning, for example of Connexions, the Children's Fund and services for young carers. Young people are actively involved at county and local level through district youth forums and shadow town councils, recruitment and selection of staff and regular meetings with elected members and senior officers. There is good support for young people's engagement in local and national campaigns. Links to the council's broader consultative processes, such as Sounding Boards, enable young people's voice to be heard at the highest level.
- Further development of participation has been a key priority for the new service through the appointment of three new posts. The Youth Opportunities Fund has been reviewed and revised to ensure greater transparency and increase young people's active involvement in grant applications and in decision making panels.
- Young people's involvement in quality assurance processes is uneven across the new service as a whole.

**The contribution of integrated support arrangements to broader strategic priorities for improving outcomes for young people is satisfactory.**

- The development of the service is taking place at a time of significant organisational and cultural change in children's services. Integrated youth support arrangements are making a satisfactory contribution to the council's highest priorities of raising attainment, safeguarding for all and narrowing the gap. However, integrated arrangements are not yet fully embedded and have not been in place long enough for the council and its partners to judge their overall impact on improving outcomes for young people.
- Insufficient attention has been given to workforce development. A new training programme is on offer to staff and partners, however this falls short of a coherent workforce strategy based on a comprehensive analysis of need. Opportunities for staff, for example, to shadow each other and share good practice are insufficiently developed.

**Areas for improvement, which we discussed, include the need to:**

- develop a service-wide quality assurance framework which includes feedback from young people
- ensure targeted youth support plays a central role in strategies to reduce teenage conceptions and increase the number of young people in education, training or employment
- provide opportunities for staff to share good practice and contribute to service planning
- develop and implement a workforce strategy.

I hope these observations are useful as you continue to develop integrated youth support arrangements.

Yours sincerely

Lisa Williams  
Her Majesty's Inspector

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### CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 22 SEPTEMBER 2009

#### Work- Programme for 2009/10

#### Work programme

##### *Existing commitments*

On Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> July 2009 the Children's Services Scrutiny Committee agreed to establish two Working Groups.

1. One is a joint working group with the Joint Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee to consider a recent report on Reducing Teenage Conceptions in Oxfordshire. This working group met on 13 August 2009 to discuss its remit and determine a work programme.
2. The second is a working group to further review work on Educational Attainment. This group met on 28 August 2009, but work is pending the full committee's decision to review membership.

##### *Future work*

At the committee meeting on 14 July 2009 members identified a significant number of proposals for future work. Officers have completed proposal forms for these ideas, and these are attached for information.

The Recommendation is that the committee may wish to hold select committees on three of the proposed items:

1. "Young people's transition into employment" combined with "Dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council"
2. "Links between Oxfordshire Schools and the Science Community"
3. "Anti-bullying"

These three suggestions stood out for their relevance to current priorities and the advantageous timing a review for this year's work programme.

It is further recommended that the committee may wish to prioritise the remaining 9 ideas, initial for a Q&A.

### List of possible Q &As for committee to prioritise

Proposal	Notes
Children's Centres	
Children's Trust	
Permanent Exclusions	
SUCCESS Project	The approach for this item was suggested as a Q&A by the Committee at the 14 <sup>th</sup> July Meeting.
Why do parents remove their children from Oxfordshire schools at age 11?	
What is the impact on Oxfordshire schools of children moving there from independent schools as a result of the recession?	
Religious Education in Schools	The Committee might need to clarify what questions it has on Religious Education
Youth Services	
Do students have a guarantee to non-faith schools?	This is not included as a proposal as it could be explained in a staff brief of presentation.
Impact of reduction of central service resources on schools	This is not included as a proposal as it relates to the work in Star Chamber. This will be clarified after the service and resource planning process.

## Scrutiny proposal form

### **Dissolution of the Learning and Skills Council, Transitioning Young People into Employment, Reducing NEETS.**

#### **Section 1 – To be completed by member/officer proposing review**

1. Who raised this issue?

This was suggested in a work programme discussion at the 14 July Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

2. Purpose of scrutinising this issue

To assess the effectiveness of programmes the council provides for preparing young people for employment in light of the dissolution of the learning and skills council and upcoming statutory changes. A major upcoming shift to require all 16-18 year olds to 'participate in learning' is set to become fully effective in 2015. These young people could still be participating in the workplace as approximately 10-15% of them currently do, but that work must have an apprenticeship (or other learning) component. The scrutiny work would challenge the directorate on the plans they are developing to ensure that the capacity to have all these young people in learning (as will be required by law) is in place.

3. Recommendation

Recommended for further review. This issue is recommended as a select committee.

#### **Section 2 : To be completed by the scrutiny team**

### **CONTEXT**

4. Which of our partners/stakeholders does this issue effect?

Oxfordshire Economic Partnership, The Further Education Colleges, Voluntary Providers, Job Centre Plus, 14-19 Strategy Group, Children's Trust

5. Who has been consulted about the upstream importance of this scrutiny item?

Sandra Higgs, Strategic Lead 14-19 Strategy, Children Young People and Families Directorate

## CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. Which corporate objective would this scrutiny item address?

World Class Economy

- Workforce skills – we have a key role in raising skills levels and aspirations to ensure all residents can contribute to and benefit from economic success. We have long established a Learning and Skills Partnership and are working with them to address our skills needs. The transfer of responsibility from the Learning and Skills Council to local authorities provides further opportunities and challenges. There is also a County Council apprenticeship scheme up and running.
- We have also led on the development of a new strategic Learning & Skills Partnership which brings together business people and commissioners/providers of skills and learning to agree and fund priorities.
- Educational Attainment – further improving educational attainment is a key political priority. We are working closely with schools to improve educational success to ensure young people from all our communities achieve their potential and leave school with the skills required for further education, employment and training.

7. Which Action Plan item from the Children and Young People's Plan would this address?

Achieve Economic Wellbeing

- reduce the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training or in jobs with no training;
- ensure that young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are properly prepared and supported for transition to post 16 education, training or employment; that there is appropriate provision which meets their needs and that they receive impartial information, advice and guidance.

8. Which Local Area Agreement target would this item address and how are we currently performing against this target (if applicable)?

NI117 16 to 18 year olds who are not in education, training, or employment.

## Concurrent Work

12. Is this issue identified in the relevant directorate's business plan?

Yes, in the Educational Attainment Business Plan

13. What work is concurrently being undertaken to address this issue?

The directorate is currently working through the 14-19 Strategy Group to anticipate the change in law. They work with the private sector to help identify working arrangements for young people which will satisfy the 'learning' requirement as well as to anticipate the impact these changes might have on the existing section of the labour market. In conjunction with this, the authority has been transitioning the role of the Learning and Skills Council which is shifting its remit to local authorities.



14. What value would the scrutiny committee add to this work?

Once the law is in effect, 16-19 year olds will be required to have a suitable learning placement. At the moment, the capacity is not there to accommodate everyone. Scrutiny work would highlight this important transition, challenge the directorate as they make plans to meet the legal obligations and help to anticipate knock-on effects this shift may have on other parts of the economy and workforce.

## Resources

15. Which scrutiny committees does this issue relate to?

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

16. What resource commitment would be needed to effectively scrutinise the item?

A select committee or working group would need an assigned officer to help manage this project.

17. What impact would allocating resources to this item have on the overall scrutiny work programme?

If this item were prioritised, it would necessarily limit the resources available for other potential areas of scrutiny the committee could consider.

## Recommendation

This item is recommended for a select committee.

## Decision of relevant Scrutiny Committee

## Decision of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group

## Scrutiny proposal form

### Linking the Science Community to Oxfordshire Schools

#### Section 1 – To be completed by member/officer proposing review

1. Who raised this issue?

This was suggested in a work programme discussion at the 14 July Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

2. Purpose of scrutinising this issue

To assess the effectiveness of programmes run by the council in linking county schools to the local science community and to provide ways this link might be expanded and strengthened.

3. Recommendation

Recommended for further review by select committee.

#### Section 2 : To be completed by the scrutiny team

##### CONTEXT

4. Which of our partners/stakeholders does this issue effect?

Oxfordshire Economic Partnership, The Further Education Colleges, Schools, Science Vale UK Partnership, and other private sector partners.

5. Who has been consulted about the upstream importance of this scrutiny item?

John Evans, School Improvement Lead and Science Advisor for the Authority, Children Young People and Families

##### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. Which corporate objective would this scrutiny item address?

World Class Economy

- Economic development – working with partners to develop a new economic strategy for the county...fulfilling the potential of the Science Vale UK area as an internationally known centre for innovation and enterprise through the Science Vale UK Partnership.
- We have also led on the development of a new strategic Learning & Skills Partnership which brings together business people and commissioners/providers of skills and learning

to agree and fund priorities.

- Educational Attainment – further improving educational attainment is a key political priority. We are working closely with schools to improve educational success to ensure young people from all our communities achieve their potential and leave school with the skills required for further education, employment and training.

7. Which Action Plan item from the Children and Young People's Plan would this address?

Enjoy and Achieve

- raising standards of educational achievement and enjoyment at all key stages
- ensuring that all schools are successful in helping pupils to have high aspirations and to make progress in line with their potential
- ensuring that all pupils leave school with a good standard of education and the qualifications, including vocational qualifications, needed for further education, employment or training

8. Which Local Area Agreement target would this item address and how are we currently performing against this target (if applicable)?

NI 083 Achievement at level 5 or above in Science at Key Stage 3

## Concurrent Work

12. Is this issue identified in the relevant directorate's business plan?

Yes (see above)

13. What work is concurrently being undertaken to address this issue?

Oxfordshire as a county arguably enjoys the largest base of scientists and technology for all of western Europe. There are enormous opportunities to tap into this unique and valuable resource as a way to further the educational attainment of young people in Oxfordshire schools. The county currently runs several programmes to link the local scientists and scientific institutions to school programmes to enhance educational opportunities and increase young people's enthusiasm for science. They have also been liaising with local science employers to identify ways in which there are skills gaps in the current workforce that improved science education could help meet.

14. What value would the scrutiny committee add to this work?

Scrutiny work on this topic could assess the total reach and effectiveness of current efforts and develop ways to enhance and expand partnerships.

## Resources

15. Which scrutiny committees does this issue relate to?

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

16. What resource commitment would be needed to effectively scrutinise the item?

A select committee or working group would need an assigned officer to help with managing the project.

17. What impact would allocating resources to this item have on the overall scrutiny work programme?  
If this item were prioritised, it would necessarily limit the resources available for other potential areas of scrutiny the committee could consider.

### **Recommendation**

Recommended for further review by select committee.

Decision of relevant Scrutiny Committee

Decision of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group

## Scrutiny proposal form

### Anti-bullying

#### **Section 1 – To be completed by member/officer proposing review**

1. Who raised this issue?

This was suggested in a work programme discussion at the 14 July Children's Services Scrutiny Committee.

2. Purpose of scrutinising this issue

To assess the bullying situation for Oxfordshire's young people and the effectiveness of anti-bullying programmes operated by the county.

3. Recommendation

Recommended for further review.

Possible options include an initial select committee or a working group to ultimately result in a review.

#### **Section 2 : To be completed by the scrutiny team**

### CONTEXT

4. Which of our partners/stakeholders does this issue effect?

Children's Trust, Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, TVP

5. Who has been consulted about the upstream importance of this scrutiny item?

Consultation with directorate to take place.

### CORPORATE PRIORITIES

6. Which corporate objective would this scrutiny item address?

Healthy and thriving communities

- Safeguarding – Ensuring that our child protection and safeguarding services are appropriately resourced, supported and effectively delivered and managed so that children and young people receive the care and protection they deserve.

7. Which Action Plan item from the Children and Young People's Plan would this address?

Stay Safe

- To improve support to schools and communities in promoting positive behaviour and emotional health and wellbeing, thereby reducing the incidence of behaviour difficulties, bullying and youth offending.
- To ensure that young people feel safe from bullying, crime and anti-social behaviour in and out of school.
- To improve the local environment to make it feel safer for young people.

Target: To reduce the number of young people who say they have been bullied in the past year.

8. Which Local Area Agreement target would this item address and how are we currently performing against this target (if applicable)?

This issue does not relate directly to the measures identified for the LAA2. However it is part of the national indicator set and is one where OCC's performance has declined recently.

## Concurrent Work

12. Is this issue identified in the relevant directorate's business plan?

Yes.

13. What work is concurrently being undertaken to address this issue?

There are anti-bullying programmes in operation throughout the county.

14. What value would the scrutiny committee add to this work?

This was identified as the number one concern of young people. According to the Children and Young People's Plan: They want adults to listen and take the problem seriously and be on top of covert bullying. They want safe "chill out" places to go in school. Above all, they want schools to involve young people in tackling bullying so that the problem is openly acknowledged and dealt with.

This is also an area that the council has historically done well with, but recent performance has been falling.

## Resources

15. Which scrutiny committees does this issue relate to?

Children's Services Scrutiny Committee

16. What resource commitment would be needed to effectively scrutinise the item?  
A select committee or working group would need an assigned officer to help manage the project.

17. What impact would allocating resources to this item have on the overall scrutiny work programme?  
If this item were prioritised, it would necessarily limit the resources available for other potential areas of scrutiny the committee could consider.

### **Recommendation**

This item is recommended for a select committee or working group.

Decision of relevant Scrutiny Committee

Decision of Scrutiny Co-ordinating Group

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