

## Notice of a Meeting

### Children's Services Scrutiny Committee Tuesday, 25 May 2010 at 10.00 am County Hall

#### Membership

Chairman - Councillor Ann Bonner  
Deputy Chairman – Councillor Neil Owen

<i>Councillors:</i>	Alyas Ahmed M. Altaf-Khan Marilyn Badcock	Anda Fitzgerald- O'Connor Janet Godden Don Seale	Dave Sexon Val Smith Nicholas P. Turner
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<i>Co-optees:</i>	Mr Chris Bevan	Mrs Sue Matthew	Mrs Galina Kildyusho va
	1 Vacancy		

#### Notes:

**Date of next meeting: 13 July 2010**

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

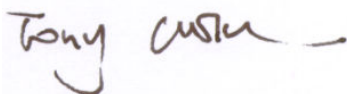
- Services for children, young people and families; preventative services; child protection; family support, educational policy; youth service; youth justice;
- Primary & secondary schools; special education; pupil services; school transport; music service

#### 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: ann.bonner@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Committee Officer	-	Deborah Miller, Tel: (01865) 815384 deborah.miller@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Tony Cloke  
Assistant Head of Legal & Democratic Services

May 2010

## 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 9 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. **Election to Chairman for the Current Council Year**
2. **Election to Deputy Chairman for the Current Council Year**
3. **Apologies for Absence and Temporary Appointments**
4. **Declarations of Interest - see guidance note on the back page**
5. **Minutes**

To approve the minutes of the meetings held on 23 February 2010 (**CH3**) and to note for information any matters arising on them.

6. **Speaking to or petitioning the Committee**
7. **Director's Update**

**10:05**

The Director for Children, Young People & Families will give a verbal update on key issues.

## **SCRUTINY MATTERS**

**To consider matters where the Committee can provide a challenge to the work of the Authority**

8. **Science in Schools**

**10:15**

In October this Committee agreed its future work programme including the wish to conduct further investigation into linking the Science Community to Oxfordshire Schools.

The Committee will receive an initial presentation from Mr John Evans, Schools Improvement Lead and will then be invited to conduct a question and answer session. Bridget Holligan, Head of Learning from Science Oxford will also be available to contribute to the debate.

***The Committee is invited to forward any comments and/or advice to the director***

*for Children, Young People & Families.*

## **9. Class of 2010**

**11:15**

The Chairman has requested an update on the initiative 'Class 2010'.

The Director for Children, Young People & Families and Alexandra Bailey, Corporate Performance Manager will give a brief presentation on the current initiative to boost this year's GCSE results and answer any questions the Committee may wish to ask.

***The Committee is invited to forward any comments and/or advice to the director for Children, Young People & Families.***

## **REVIEW WORK**

**To take evidence, receive progress updates and consider tracking reports**

## **10. Scrutiny Update**

**11:45**

Ms Lisa Michelson has been invited to update the Committee at the meeting on current activity in the work programme as follows:

- Outcome of Seminar on the dissolution of the Learning & Skills Council, Transitioning Young People into Employment and Reducing NEETs in Oxfordshire;
- Feedback on bullying debate;
- Educational Attainment Scrutiny Review – Update

***The Committee is asked to note the updates.***

## **BUSINESS PLANNING**

**To consider future work items for the Committee**

## **11. Traveller's Children Education Provision**

**11:55**

The Chairman has requested that the Committee look at the provision to address the educational needs of Travellers' children as well as other children who may change schools frequently.

Rennie Thompson, Service Manager, Monitor and Tracking CYPF, Maggie Hartley, Advisory Support Teacher for the Education of Travellers and Alan Linsay, Strategic Lead, School Improvement will give a brief presentation to the Committee and will be

available to answer any questions the Committee may wish to ask.

***The Committee is asked to consider whether this is an area that requires further investigation.***

## **12. Youth Centres Admittance Policy**

**12:25**

The Chairman has requested that the Copmmittee conduct an intial examination on the current policies and practice for admittance of young people to youth centres.

Officers from Children, Young People & Families will give a breif presentation and answer any question the Committee may wish to ask.

***The Committee is invited to consider whether this is an area that requires further investigation.***

## **13. Forward Plan**

**12:55**

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.

## **14. Close of Meeting**

**1:00 pm**

## 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 Part 9.1 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.

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**MINUTES** of the meeting held on Tuesday, 23 February 2010 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.20 pm.

**Present:**

**Voting Members:** Councillor Ann Bonner – in the Chair

Councillor M. Altaf-Khan  
Councillor Neil Owen (Deputy Chairman)  
Councillor M. Altaf-Khan  
Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor  
Councillor Janet Godden  
Councillor Pete Handley  
Councillor Dave Sexon  
Councillor Sajjad Hussain Malik (Saj) (In place of  
Councillor Val Smith)  
Councillor Don Seale  
Councillor Dave Sexton

**Other Members in Attendance:** Councillor Louise Chapman and Councillor Michael Waine.

**Co-opted Members:** Mr Chris Bevan, Mrs Sue Matthew and Mrs Galina Kildyushova.

**By Invitation:** Ms Carole Thomson (Oxfordshire Governors' Association) and Ms B Williams (COTO).

**Officers:**

Whole of meeting L. Michelson and D. Miller (Corporate Core).

Part of meeting

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Officer Attending</b>
5	J. Brown and K McGraw (Children, Young People & Families).
6	R. Leach (Children, Young People & Families).
8	C.Abolins (Children, Young People & Families).

*The Scrutiny Committee considered the matters, reports and recommendations contained or referred to in the agenda for the meeting, together with the following additional documents:*

- An additional briefing paper in relation to Agenda Item 5;*
- A proposed agenda in relation to Agenda Item 7 and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda, reports and additional documents are attached to the signed Minutes.*

**51/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND TEMPORARY APPOINTMENTS**

(Agenda No. 1)

Apologies for absence and temporary appointments were received as follows:

**Apology from**

**Temporary Appointments**

Councillor Val Smith  
Cllr Marilyn Badcock  
Cllr Roger Belson  
Mr Mark Forder

Councillor Sajjad Hussain Malik  
-  
-  
Ms Brenda Williams

**52/10 MINUTES**

(Agenda No. 3)

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 8 December 2009 were approved and signed.

**Matters Arising**

**SERVICE AND RESOURCE PLANNING 2010/11 - 2014/15**

The Chairman reported that she had been delighted to see that the comments of the Scrutiny Committee had been taken on board when the Cabinet had considered the budget, particularly in relation to Youth Services.

**53/10 BULLYING**

(Agenda No. 5)

Members of the Committee received a presentation (a copy of which is attached to the signed Minutes), together with briefing papers (**CH5**) prepared by Jo Brown, Anti-Bullying Coordinator, Rennie Thompson, Service Manager and Katie McGraw, National Management Trainee on the forthcoming review of the anti-bullying strategy with multi-agency partners. This item had been one of the three principle topics earmarked at the 22 September meeting for review.

Chief Inspector Lindsey Finch and Dave Parry, Youth Justice Manager, Thames Valley Police also attended to contribute to the debate.

Following the presentation, the Committee conducted a question and answer session. The key some points arising from the debate are set out below:

The Committee recognised that there were a number of multi-agency partners working hard in this area. They recommended that the following points be incorporated into the service strategy in order to promote effective joint working:



- The Committee recommends that the Anti-Bullying Co-ordinator should be involved in the establishment and development of Safer Schools Partnerships, and that the Co-ordinator considers becoming involved in Safer Schools Partnerships Steering Group;
- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator further develop their links with Thames Valley Police, especially with regard to joint training;
- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator considers signposting schools to the support which other agencies can provide in order to tackle the underlying problems of children who bully.

Much of the Committee's debate centred around the crucial role which schools must play in tackling bullying. As such, the Committee recommended that the following points related to the Co-ordinator's work with schools were reflected in the strategy:

- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator should have due regard to the existing pressures on school staff time whilst developing its programme of work;
- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator should, where possible, pursue links with school councils;
- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator should encourage governing bodies to actively monitor both the bullying situation and the implementation of an anti-bullying strategy in their schools;
- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator examine alternative means of communicating with schools and teaching staff, so as to reduce reliance on its website.

The Committee further welcomed the contribution made on behalf of Thames Valley Police and urged that the two points related to the collection and reporting of data be addressed as follows:

- The Committee suggests that the Co-ordinator should consider setting minimum standards for data sharing;
- The Committee suggests that the service should consider the issue of serial bullying and whether this can be tracked.

The following specific issues were also put forward for consideration:

- The Co-ordinator should consider developing clear guidance on bullying, focussing particularly on resilience to bullying, for circulation to parents. The service should consider ways they can encourage pupils to have empathy for others;
- The Co-ordinator should think about what sanctions schools can take against bullies, and advise schools on potential effectiveness;
- The Committee recommends that the Co-ordinator should recognise that the bullying of teachers remains an issue.

Finally, the Committee was of the opinion that working to tackle cyber-bullying should remain a priority.

Following debate, officers undertook to give consideration to the Committee's points when reviewing the Anti-Bullying Strategy.

The Committee AGREED to:

- (a) Write to all Local Authority Governing Bodies in Oxfordshire, with a copy to all Head Teachers, outlining the services and initiatives that the County Council offer in relation to Anti-Bullying;
- (b) ask officers for a report back to the Committee in six months time.

#### **54/10 SCHOOL ENROLMENT**

(Agenda No. 6)

In October this Committee had agreed its future work programme including the wish to conduct further investigation into the area of school enrolment.

The Committee considered a briefing paper (**CH6**) on the impact on school enrolment of the rising influx of children from the independent sector into state schools and what steps the Authority was taking to address it.

Mr Roy Leach, Strategic Lead, School Organisation & Planning was available to answer any questions the Committee may have wished to ask on the briefing.

The Committee thanked Mr Leach for his report and concluded that no further investigation into this area was needed at this time.

#### **55/10 CHILDREN'S SERVICES SEMINAR**

(Agenda No. 7)

Ms Michelson circulated a copy of a proposed agenda for the forthcoming Seminar on Raising the Age of Participation. She urged members to send any suggestions for the day to herself or the Chairman.

The Committee noted the date for Seminar and made the following suggestions for inclusion to the Agenda for the day:

- Invite a high level representative from the Learning & Skills Council (LSC) who will be able to comment on funding arrangements following the demise of the LSC;
- Invite the Head of Adult Learning (Jane Dixon) or representative from Thames Valley IOD.

#### **56/10 CHILDREN'S CENTRES PROGRAMME**

(Agenda No. 8)

In October this Committee had agreed its future work programme including the wish to monitor the progress of the Children's Centres Programme. The Committee was invited to consider a briefing paper on the current progress of the programme. Ms

Claire Abolins attended to answer any questions the Committee may have wished to ask on the briefing.

The Committee was invited to consider whether this is an area that requires further investigation.

The Committee thanked Ms Abolins for her report and noted that Oxfordshire had been recognised by the Government Development Agency as having made very good progress in its development of Children’s centres and undertook to ask officers to report back to the Committee following the completion of phase 3 of the project.

**57/10 FORWARD PLAN**

(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee was 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 was taken, together with details of what it thought could be achieved by looking at the item.

No items were identified.

**58/10 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT SCRUTINY REVIEW - UPDATE**

(Agenda No. 10)

Ms Michelson updated the Committee on progress made on the Educational Attainment Scrutiny Review. She reported that the working Group had identified 16 schools to visit and that 13 visits had now been completed. A report on their findings was being drafted. The arrangements for the select committee to happen in April/early May were still on schedule.

The Committee noted the update.

**59/10 CLOSE OF MEETING**

(Agenda No. 11)

The Meeting Closed at 12.20 pm.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing .....

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