

CHILDREN'S SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MINUTES of the meeting held on Tuesday, 28 September 2010 commencing at 10.00 am and finishing at 12.50 pm.

Present:

Voting Members: Councillor Ann Bonner – in the Chair

Councillor Dave Sexon (Deputy Chairman)
Councillor Janet Godden
Councillor Alyas Ahmed
Councillor M. Altaf-Khan
Councillor Marilyn Badcock
Councillor Mrs Anda Fitzgerald-O'Connor
Councillor Don Seale
Councillor Val Smith
Councillor Nicholas P. Turner

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

Co-opted Members: Mr Chris Bevan
Mrs Sue Matthew

By Invitation: Ms Carole Thomson (Oxfordshire Governors' Association) Ms Brenda Williams (COTO).

Officers:

Whole of meeting Director for Children, Young People & Families, Mr Roger Edwards and Mrs D Miller (Corporate Core).

Part of meeting Ms Sarah Breton and Ms Lucy Russel (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 a schedule of addenda tabled at the meeting/the following additional documents:] and agreed as set out below. Copies of the agenda and reports [agenda, reports and schedule/additional documents] are attached to the signed Minutes.

85/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - SEE GUIDANCE NOTE ON THE BACK PAGE

(Agenda No. 2)

Councillor Nick Turner declared a Personal Interest in all the items on the Agenda which included reference to the North Oxfordshire as he was a member of the governing body for North Oxfordshire Academy.

86/10 MINUTES

(Agenda No. 3)

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 31 August 2010 were approved and signed subject to:

- Ms Carole Thompson being added to the Apologies for Absence;
- an introduction being added to Minute 84/10, outlining the reasons given for call-in; and
- a note indicating that the Chairman had stressed the importance of Members not straying from the points of the call-in during debate.

Matters Arising

Minute 80/10:

- Members were advised that the date of the visit to North Oxfordshire Academy arranged for the 24 September 2010 had been changed to 8 October 2010 at 2.00pm. Any Members wishing to attend should inform John Mitchell.
- Michael Waine to arrange meeting with Head of Science.

87/10 SERVICE & RESOURCE PLANNING

(Agenda No. 5)

The Director for Children, Young People & Families gave a presentation to the Committee which provided a high level overview of the services provided by the Directorate and the challenges which would need to be addressed to meet the savings target. A copy of the presentation is appended to these Minutes and to the signed Minutes.

With regard to the finer detail of the slides, the Committee raised the following issues for consideration at the next meeting of the Committee:

- The Committee asked the Director if she could provide further figures on any decrease in non-accidental child death and children requiring visits to visit hospital as a result of accident, using the recently published safeguarding research.
- The Committee noted that at present there were around 50 looked after children in residential care and that currently Oxfordshire did not have 50 in-county places – could more be done to provide more in-county placements?

- The Committee noted that there had been a 17% increase in Children in Care since the Baby P case and that Child Protection Plans were being applied consistently and should help regulate increase.
- Members requested that Corporate Policy copy the digest of Government White Papers to all Members of the Committee.
- The Committee thanked the Director for briefing Head Teachers and Governors throughout the process.
- The Committee noted that cuts would affect partnerships and that it would be very important to ensure that organisations supporting children and families continued joined up working.

The Committee thanked the Director for Children, Young People & Families for her presentation and requested a further update, to include the outcome of the white paper at its meeting in November.

88/10 CHILDREN'S TRUST (Agenda No. 6)

The Committee received a presentation from Ms Sarah Breton, Strategic Lead and Head of Joint Commissioning on the Government Reform of Children's Trusts. A copy of the presentation is appended to these Minutes and to the signed copy of the Minutes.

The key points of the reform was as follows:

- The Government intended to remove the duty on schools to co-operate through Children's Trusts (via education Bill);
- The reform would remove the requirement on local authorities to set up Children's Trust Boards;
- It would remove the requirement for the Boards to prepare and publish a Children's & Young Peoples Plan (CYPP);
- Regulations underpinning the CYPP would be revoked;
- Statutory guidance on Children's Trusts would be withdrawn in the Autumn.

Councillor Louise Chapman, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families welcomed the changes outlined in the presentation and in particular the ability for the Trust to make their own arrangements locally, working in partnership with other agencies.

She reported that although the Trust had decided to stay in its current format for the time being, that she believed the trust would in future focus around Health & Wellbeing. The next step would be for the Trust to come together to decide upon new structures. It was vital that Young People's interests were represented at the Health & Wellbeing Board.

The Committee then conducted a question and answer session. A selection of the Committee's questions, together with Ms Breton's responses, is listed below:

- Is the County Council well on the way (compared to other authorities) to achieving this change? Links organisation – at the moment they don't look at children – is there any plans for them to become involved? Removal of schools duty to co-operate – is there any incentive?

Councillor Chapman – Yes we are well on our way to achieving the change.

Sarah Breton - Links – There is a recognition that we will need examples of good practice.

Meera Spillett– There is concern about schools duty to co-operate. There is a duty for schools to safeguard children - we have asked why this has been removed – in my professional opinion I think it should not be removed – we have lobbied MP's not to take it out.

- Could we ask for the Committee to be represented on the Health and Wellbeing Board?

Meera Spillett – I am very satisfied that our voice is being heard.

- Could the Council's response to the White Paper be copied to all Members of the Scrutiny Committee?

The Committee **AGREED** to ask the Cabinet to ensure that Children are properly represented when the new Health & Wellbeing Board is established.

The Committee further agreed to ask officers to report back to the Committee at its April Meeting giving further clarity around the future of the Children's Trust.

89/10 TEENAGE PREGNANCY IN OXFORDSHIRE

(Agenda No. 7)

The report before the Committee (CH7) outlined the outcome of a data assessment of Oxfordshire's teenage pregnancy strategy delivery, together with an action plan identifying a number of key areas for action.

Ms Sarah Breton, Strategic Lead and Head of Joint Commissioning and Ms Lucy Russell, Reducing Teenage Pregnancy Co-Ordinator attended the meeting to present the report and answer any questions that the Committee may have wished to ask.

Ms Russell reported that there had been real progress around prevention and getting young people back into education, employment and training.

A Task and Finish group was established to ensure accountability for actions and to monitor progress. This was Chaired by the Assistant Director of Public Health and attendees represented a wide range of services. Regular performance data reports covering national data sets and data from Integrated Youth Support Service, contraception and sexual health, Oxford Radcliff Hospital termination of pregnancy service and child health data.

She reported that they had now extended the school nurse programme so that the service ran in Banbury and Oxford during the summer holidays and that the service included a weekday text or phone line for young people to ask for help and that this was being used successfully.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families reported that the action plan was having a positive effect and that the future rate would go down even more. Oxford remained well below national average and resources had been targeted for hotspots in Banbury and Oxford. Focus now needed to be shifted to local market towns. She welcomed the excellent partnership working between the County Council and Health Authority.

The Committee then conducted a question and answer session. A selection of the Committee's questions, together with Ms Russell's responses, is listed below:

- Are there any statistics on situations where teenage pregnancies occur. Has there been any impact as a result of "last orders".

We examine attitudes of young people before and after watching 'last orders'. Young People have come away understanding the relationship between alcohol and sexual health. The data has been scrutinised by Brooks working with Years 9 and 10. We expect to see result within 2 to 3 years.

The situation where teenage pregnancies occur are in areas of deprivation; homeless young men and in youth with behavioural problems. We have indication that there is a link between attendance problems and a strong decline in contraception. This is assessed by conception rates and take up by young people of services.

- Could we have a section on young people with learning difficulties/special needs?
- Will the intervention kit be launched in Banbury as well as Oxford?

Yes, the intervention kit will be rolled out into Banbury following the 4 months pilot in Oxford.

The Committee thanked Ms Russell for her presentation and requested a further report back to its Meeting in April.

90/10 SELECT COMMITTEE ON EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT (Agenda No. 8)

The Committee AGREED to defer consideration of this item to the next Meeting of the Committee to allow for further work to be carried out on clarifying the recommendations.

91/10 YOUTH CENTRES ADMITTANCE POLICY

(Agenda No. 9)

The Committee received an update from Mr Roger Edwards, Policy & Performance on the joint working with the Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee on this issue.

He reported that a management report on current policy and procedure for the admittance of youth to youth centres was due to be produced in the next week and that he was seeking members for a working group to examine the report and give advice as to the suitability of current practice.

The Committee AGREED to nominate Councillors N. Turner, D. Sexon and V. Smith to the Working Group set up by Safer & Stronger Communities Scrutiny Committee to examine Youth Centres Admittance Policy.

92/10 WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

(Agenda No. 10)

The Committee considered a copy of the timetable, tabled at the meeting, for the work programme for 2010/11.

The Committee agreed the work programme attached at Annex 1 to the Minutes (amendments shown in bold italics).

93/10 FORWARD PLAN

(Agenda No. 11)

The Committee identified no items from the current Forward Plan on which it wished to have an opportunity to offer advice to the Cabinet before any decision was taken.

..... in the Chair

Date of signing