

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD,
ON THURSDAY, 1 OCTOBER 2009**

Membership

* J Aldridge	* D Morris
* J Baugh	* R Pearson
* A Brown	* C Riley (Vice-Chairman)
* L Dangerfield	* T Sargent
* J Deakin	* M. Skeels (Substitute for S-Mayzes)
* Mrs. M Hutchon (Vice-Chairman) S Mayzes	* K Twitchen (Chairman) J Young

(* present)

Non-Elected Voting Members

* Mr. O Richards	Reverend P Trathern
Mr. R Carson	Vacancy

The following officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Vivien Door	- Committee Officer
Graham Redgwell	- Governance Officer

The meeting opened at 10.00 am.

67. Apologies and Substitution Notices

The Committee Officer reported the receipt of the following apologies:-

Apologies	Substitutes
Cllr S Mayzes	Cllr M Skeels
Mr Richard Carson	

68. Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were recorded:

All Members of the Committee	Have a Personal Interest as Members of School Governing Bodies
Councillor J Baugh	Personal interest as a Founder Member and regular volunteer of the Braintree Community Youth Project
Councillor L Dangerfield	Personal Interest as his child attends Burnt Mills School

69. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 September 2009 were received and signed as a correct record with the amendment that Councillor R Pearson had sent his apologies.

70. Variation in the Order of Business

The Chairman proposed a variation in the order of business taking Item 4, Teams Around Schools, Children and the Community (TASCCs) and Item 5, Children's Trust as one item. The proposal was agreed.

71. Teams Around Schools, Children and the Community (TASCCs) and Children's Trust**Teams Around Schools, Children and the Community (TASCCs)**

The Committee considered the reports and the presentation from Lou Williams, Head of External Placements and High Level Family Support. Graham Tombs, Executive Director: Schools, Children and Families Services was also in attendance for most of this item.

Lou Williams gave the Committee background information on the current TASCCs structure. The TASCCs were originally set up two years ago to support children 0 to 19 years old following the Braintree Pilot Scheme, although they did not have the advantage of the pilot scheme with its extra funding. The TASCCs were set up and resourced within the existing Schools, Children and Families Directorate budget. There were 29 TASCCs set up to provide local delivery but it became clear that these resources were spread too thinly. For example, an Education Welfare Officer works for two TASCC teams, but there was no cover for this officer for leave or sickness. The TASCCs were resourced as multi-agency teams, which gave the opportunity for better working together but resources were spread consistently across the County and not targeted to specific need in different localities within the County.

TASCCs were put in place to enable children, young people and families to receive intervention to prevent problems escalating to a higher level of need. Children's Centres were set up for the most vulnerable 20 per cent of children now there were Children's Centres in every community to support all children aged 0 to 5 years old. Vulnerable families would be contacted personally by a health professional to be encouraged to attend the Children's Centre.

As a result of a recent review a report could be submitted to Cabinet in December. It could be proposed that TASCCs teams be reorganised. Team members would still work at a local level but be managed by four Business Design and Re-Integration Teams as the four area Quadrant Leadership Teams. These teams would be multi-agency. Each agency would manage its own staff in the TASCCs. These Quadrant Leadership Teams should improve links between schools and other partners. There would also be Multi-Agency Allocation Groups (MAAGs) at District and Borough level to provide multi-agency working and delivery. A Common Assessment Framework (CAF) would still be used so that information could be passed to other agencies and families would only need to tell their stories once. The four Quadrant Leadership Teams would make the strategic decisions on the CAFs to give the children and young people the appropriate resources for their needs in order to provide an integrated package.

Graham Tombs informed the Committee by reorganising, the TASCCs would strengthen locality working, respond to local need and expand on the positive

work already undertaken. It was acknowledged that TASCs resources were spread too thinly and had been swamped with requests for support which was not in their remit. It was hoped that by reorganising, TASCs would give the multi-agencies more ownership and thereby provide multi-agency support where required. This should provide early intervention to prevent and eventually stop acute needs at a later stage. All agencies need to be more proactive early on in the process to make improvements for children, young people and families.

Children's Trust

Lou Williams informed the Committee that the Apprenticeship, Skills, Children and Learning Bill should be in place in April 2010. This gives Children's Trust Boards statutory powers. The current 11 Children and Young People Strategic Partnerships (CYPSPs) would be reduced to five Local Children's Trust Boards, which would be arranged around the five Primary Care Trust boundaries. These Children's Trust Boards would be locality based and therefore would be more accountable locally. The funding for the CYPSPs would be passed on to the appropriate Children's Trust Boards.

During the discussion a number of points were made:

- Members were concerned that they did not have the full information on how TASCs would be reorganised, regarding how many TASCs and where they would be situated and therefore were unable to make reasonable judgements on the proposals going to the December Cabinet meeting.
- Members were concerned that the CAF had not worked well so far as some agencies had not completed them fully.
- Members were also concerned that this new system seemed to have a more complex management structure than the 29 TASCs.
- Members were concerned that the Children's Trust Boards could become unwieldy with their large membership but accepted that the number of agencies to be included in the membership of the Board was a legal requirement.
- Members were also concerned at an apparent discrepancy, in that there would be five Children's Trust Boards but only four Business Design Strategic Teams for TASC management.

The Committee **Agreed** that the officers would provide a map of Essex to include the boundaries of all the District/Borough Councils, TASCs, MAAGs, and Children's Trust Boards:

The Chairman thanked Graham Tombs and Lou Williams for their comments and attendance at this meeting.

72. Underachievement in Schools

The Committee considered the report by Terry Reynolds, Director for Learning School Improvement and Early Years.

Terry Reynolds informed the Committee that the 2009 Underachievement figures were incomplete as some data was not available until March 2010. The Directorate have had discussions on the telephone to obtain information. It is possible that Essex may achieve relatively well against its statistical neighbours.

It was noted that Key Stage 3 measurements were not recorded nationally.

The Key points that were measured were:

Attainment	Number of Exam passes at A – C
Achievement	If a child/young person achieved a D Grade at exam level it may be a great achievement for the individual pupil
Progress	The individual pupil's travel from the last exam to the latest results

Foundation Level

Pupils were tested at the end of Reception year by teachers on 13 different scales, all of which have nine points, one being the lowest and nine the highest.

Essex had previously scored low in these measurements but informally the Directorate had learnt that the other statistical neighbours results have not improved significantly. Essex had improved. Girls have improved significantly more than boys and there had been a big increase on the outcomes for Looked After Children (LAC), although there were few LAC children at age five. There was also an increase for pupils with Special Educational Needs. The gap was narrowing but Essex was still behind the targets that have been set.

Key Stage 2

Pupils were tested at the end of Primary School in Year 6. This measurement was to see if they have attained level 4 English and Mathematics and was a percentage of both English and Mathematics.

The Committee should note that these results were provisional as some schools were still querying their English marks. The English results were down, reading was down with boys results on a decline of 2 per cent. Essex was still in line with the national average and its statistical neighbours. The gender gap for reading was 7 per cent with boys lower than girls and in writing it was a 10 per cent gap with boys lower than girls. Mathematics was in line with the national average. English and Mathematics together have a 5 per cent gap with boys worse than girls. There was a most significant improvement in Essex for pupils who have free school meals and for pupils with Special Educational Needs. There was no comparative information to date.

The Reading test was a written paper testing pupils' understanding for both fiction and non fiction.

Key Stage 4

This was measured at the end of Year 11 on the achievement of five or more A* - C grades in GCSEs or equivalent.

Schools reported a significant improvement. Students attaining five or more A* - C GCSEs have improved by 5.1 per cent, whereas students attaining five or more A* - C GCSEs which include English and Mathematics have improved by 2.2 per

cent. This was significantly better than the national data where these measurements have improved by 2 per cent.

There were categories for schools with particular concerns. One measure was the number of students attaining five A* - C GCSEs, where fewer than 30 per cent of students did not achieve. The percentage had not reduced as much as the Directorate had hoped. There were 14 schools with particular concerns and 12 have made improvements. By 2011 if these schools have not improved their results then the school could either become an Academy, a Federation school or close.

There was currently no information on the value added scores, but it was expected that this score would increase.

A good news story was Debden Park School which went into Special Measures in 2007. The latest Ofsted report had moved it out of Special Measures and shown that it was classed as outstanding in 26 out of 29 categories.

Age 19

This was measured on Level 2 and 3 qualifications. Five A – Cs not including English and Mathematics was equivalent to a BTEC. Level two was equivalent to two A levels. If a student was doing well in these measurements then there was a sign that they were achieving in other areas.

At this stage there was a tentative picture, as the final data was not due until March/April 2010 from the Learning and Skills Council. The information was provided for the whole of Essex and not split into districts. In 2008 Essex increased its score but was still below the East of England average. The problem with Level 2 was the number of students dropping out of the courses. Tendring had the highest Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) figures for 16 or 17 year olds in Essex, there was an increase of 1.5 per cent NEET in August but August was always high.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- A Member asked a question that when there was a large intake of boys, for example, 80 per cent of boys in one year group, this factor would be significant in a small rural school. The formula for the funding allocation for each school takes account of social deprivation but not for gender. There were some areas of study where girls perform worse than boys.
- A Member asked a question regarding too many pupils, 15 per cent, leaving primary school who were unable to read and write. Not all pupils within this percentage have profound special needs. One fifth of pupils who were unable to attain the levels at Key Stage 2 received one to one tuition with teachers.
- Members were concerned that as there was no longer a test for 14 years old as five years was a long time in a young person's life to wait for the next test to check on their progress.
- A Member was concerned regarding Burnt Mills results at Key Stage 4, this was due to a less able cohort in the year group. There was a new Headteacher now in post.
- A good leadership team makes a school good and a Headteacher cannot do this on his/her own. But a bad Headteacher could ruin a good school.

Small Primary schools could cluster and employ a Bursar to relieve the leadership team of some administration work.

- Some schools were interested in changing from A Level examinations to the International Baccalaureate. Using this system would give students a broader subject range rather than narrowing down to two or three A Levels.
- Fourteen to nineteen year olds vocational education was based on diplomas and does not teach work skills, although it was difficult to forward plan as job skills change. It may be more practical to teach young people and adults the skills to enjoy learning for life. People no longer have a job for life and therefore need to re-skill continuously.

The Chairman thanked Terry Reynolds for his information and interesting update. The matter would continue to be monitored from time to time.

73. Government statement regarding the reduction in funding for Education

A Member asked a question regarding the proposed Government cuts to the education funding next year and how this would impact in classrooms. Graham Redgwell had contacted officers in the Schools, Children and Families Directorate who informed him that the Directorate had received no breakdown of what funding cuts might occur. Graham Redgwell would update Members on developments once the position became clearer.

74. Young Essex Assembly and Older People's Planning Group for Local Democracy Week Event on 19 October

The Chairman encouraged the Committee to attend the Young Essex Assembly and the Older People's Planning Group joint meeting. The YEA have planned an intergenerational event that would help to break down some of the negative stereotypes associated with teenagers and older people and show how much both generations have in common and could learn from each other.

75. Essex Youth Scrutiny Committee (EYSC) Report

Councillor Hutchon told the Committee about the Scrutiny Day on 24 September, held at the Holiday Inn, Basildon. This event was the culmination of the EYSC consultation with 1500 young people over the summer months on their choice of scrutiny subject. The scrutiny chosen was Anti-Bullying. The Scrutiny Day had been enjoyed by the young people, the EYSC members and those adults participating in the event.

The Chairman informed the Committee that the EYSC witness sessions would take place on Monday 19 and Wednesday 21 October. These meetings would take place in public and would be webcast live. Councillor Martin was very supportive and had shown his interest in the Scrutiny Day and on moving the EYSC work forward. The Chairman thanked all the staff involved in this pilot scheme.

76. Member visits to children's homes

The Committee considered proposals by the Chairman of the Committee to visit Children's Residential homes in November rather than holding a formal meeting that month.

The Committee **Agreed** to visit a Children's home (from the list of five homes, now circulated) in small groups on 5 November to talk to staff and any children who may be present.

Vivien Door would coordinate these visits.

77. Non County Placements

The Committee considered an oral report by the Chairman of the Committee in the light of a recent meeting with Directorate officers to consider what further action was required by this Committee. The issue of the number of Essex children placed out of county, and the cost of these placements, had been raised with her by a member of the P&SS Committee. The Chairman explained that all Local Authorities with Social Services place children and young people out of county in specialist accommodation which can be very expensive, and she had been told that the position in Essex was under constant review.

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The Committee **Agreed** that Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Director for Commissioning, would be invited to a future meeting.

78. Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee noted the dates of future meetings as set out and noted that future meetings may comprise:

- Meetings in private
- Meetings in public
- Working groups
- Sub-Committee meetings
- Outside visits

Thursday 5th November 2009 – Visits to Children's Homes

Thursday 3rd December 2009

Thursday 7th January 2010

Thursday 4th February 2010

Thursday 4th March 2010

Thursday 1st April 2010

The meeting closed at 12.50 pm.

Chairman