

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, ON THURSDAY 4 FEBRUARY 2010

Membership

Councillors

* J Aldridge	* S Mayzes
J Baugh	* R Pearson
* A Brown	* C Riley (In the Chair)
* L Dangerfield	* T Sargent
* Mrs J Deakin	* M Skeels
* Mrs M Hutchon	Kay Twitchen (Chairman)
* J Knapman (Substitute for D Morris)	* J Young

Non-Elected Voting Members

Mr R Carson	* Reverend P Trathern
* Mr O Richards	Vacancy
(* present)	

Councillor T Higgins was also present.

The following officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Vivien Door	Committee Officer
Graham Redgwell	Governance Officer

The meeting opened at 10.00

11. Apologies

The Committee Officer reported the receipt of the following apologies:

Apologies	Substitutes
Cllr D Morris	Cllr J Knapman
Cllr K Twitchen	
Cllr J Baugh	
Mr R Carson	

12. Declarations of Interest

The following declarations of interest were recorded:

Cllr C Riley	Personal interest as Member of the North East Fostering Panel: as Member of the provisional Children's Trust Board and as Member of the Children's Centre Partnership Board, (Strategic Group) and Vice Chairmanship of The Corporate Parenting Panel.
Cllr Mrs T Higgins	Personal interest as Chairman of Colchester YMCA

13. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 January 2010 were approved as a correct record.

14. Matters Arising

No Matters Arising were reported.

15. Children's Trust

The Committee considered an update on the Essex Children's Trust, CYP/04/10, which was updated orally at the meeting by Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Director for Commissioning, and Elaine Fulton, Interim Head of Integrated Localities Commissioning, Schools, Children and Families Directorate.

Background

The Children's Trust was a joint partnership group of Chief Executives and Directors from the Children's Services, (the lead authority); 12 District Councils; Police Authority; Local Probation Board; Youth Offending Service; Strategic Health Authority; Primary Care Trusts; Services provided under section 114 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 (c. 21); and the Learning and Skills Council. The Children's Trust links with the Essex Partnership, the Essex Safeguarding Children's Board (ESCB), Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), and the Safer Essex Partnership.

The Trust was a statutory partnership between these specified partners, who have a duty to co-operate to secure improvement in the well being of children and young people as defined by Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 and The Apprenticeships, Children, Skills and Learning Act of 2009.

The Children's Trust in Essex had developed an agreement to which each partner had committed to the responsibilities of membership of the Trust. Each individual partner remained accountable to their own agency and Trust decisions had to be consistent with partners own constitutions and rules. The Children's Trust did not have the legal capacity to bind the individual Partners to nor to enter into contracts for its own benefit. All contracts were entered into by the relevant Partner in compliance with their own constitution and rules.

Vision

The vision statement agreed by all Trust partners was:-

"We want children and young people in Essex to be valued, inspired, loved, nurtured and encouraged, with opportunities to achieve their immediate and long term ambitions. Our role was to improve the life chances of all and to provide extra support for those who need it".

Priorities

The Trust's priorities were those found in Every Child Matters. These were:

Be Healthy, by tackling health inequalities and helping all children and young people make informed healthy lifestyle choices, with access to the services they need.

Stay Safe, by strengthening the services and processes that keep children and young people safe from neglect and abuse.

Enjoy and Achieve, by enabling all children and young people to aspire, learn, achieve highly and realise their potential.

Make a positive contribution, by providing all children and young people with opportunities for a fulfilling and enjoyable childhood.

Achieve economic well-being, by reducing the impact of poverty and the recession on the lives of all children and young people and their families.

'Narrow the Gap', by improving the life chances of Looked After Children, young carers and all other children and families at risk of poor outcomes.

Local Children's Trust Boards

Five Local Children's Trust Boards were accountable for developing local priorities and deployment of resources to deliver improved outcomes. These Boards would become the primary mechanism by which resources were delegated away from the centre, enabling effective aligning of resources between key partners and deploying resources to meet areas of high need within each locality.

Each local Children's Trust Board includes a Member, as follows:

North East	Cllr M Page
Mid	Cllr J Pike
South East	Cllr C Riley
South West	Cllr A Naylor
West	Cllr R Gooding

Benefits

- Transparent planning and decision making all partners could understand and work within, with clear lines of accountability providing credible and deliverable strategies and plans;
- Aligned commissioning cycles and effective use of resources preventing duplication of activities and resources;
- The Children's Trust would be able to influence locally, regionally and nationally and provide an improved access for service users.

Challenges

- To develop a tapestry of family and other support services to promote the wellbeing and safety of our children and young people, including those who were most vulnerable, ensuring maximum value for money whilst responding to future economic challenges;

- To deliver consistency across Essex in accordance with need;
- To achieve the requirements of the Improvement Notice;
- To reduce the reliance on expensive out of county placements.

During a lengthy discussion the following points were made:

- That Harlow and Braintree Chief Executives reported back to all the District Councils and that South East Essex Primary Care Trust (PCT) Chief Executive feeds back to all the PCTs;
- That improving child poverty and resolving housing problems could be key to improving a child's life;
- That the Joint Commissioning Board meets monthly and the Multi Agency Allocation Groups meet weekly;
- That when children and young people were waiting for a Special Needs statement, it could take time, and sometimes the young person was left at home with little education. All children and young people not at school should receive 25 hours education a week;
- More school places were required for children and young people with Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties;
- The Children's Trust listens to both parents and children and support both. There were four parent co-ordinators one for each quadrant;
- Children and young people were engaged through their plan and their responses were listened to when they have difficulties in their home or placement;
- The Trust could provide for every child's needs both, universally and specifically targeting children with specific needs;
- Local Delivery Groups had devolved funding to schools which had been helped to build capacity to commission services;
- Currently there was no Diocese representative on the Children's Board. Such an appointment would be considered;
- The Delivery Groups contain representatives from state run Primary, Secondary and Special Schools;
- Members would like to see how effective the children and young people Action Plan had been compared with previous years. The next refresh of the Action Plan would take place in June 2010;
- The partners in the Children's Trust align their resources but do not pool budgets.

The Chairman thanked Wendi Ogle-Welbourn and Elaine Fulton for their informative presentation.

16. Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

The Committee considered information on the NEET programme in Essex CYP/05/10, which was supplemented orally at the meeting by Clare Kershaw 14-19 Strategy Manager, Schools, Children and Families and Peter Cook, Assistant Director, Skills & International Trade.

NEET

The data was monitored weekly for the complex group of 16, 17 and 18 year olds. Young people for various reasons move in and out of NEET. Essex had a good track record of moving young people out of NEET until the economic recession. In a recession young people were the first to struggle to gain employment or

apprenticeships. Basildon and Tendring District Councils had large numbers of NEET, there were also issues in Colchester Borough and Braintree District, Braintree College had received a bad Ofsted report which had had an influence in the latter case.

The Council need to engage schools where young people were disengaged in school in order to provide alternative training and employment options. Multiple agencies were involved with NEET to provide a sustained impact. The Total Place Project was being focused on Tendring District Council, although there had been numerous funding initiatives in this district, there was still no long term sustainable impact being made. The research into the cultural and deprivation issues and the costal seasonal opportunities would conclude in March 2010. The results should bring about both short and long term solutions.

Reducing NEETs in Essex (RONIE) was specifically aimed at Children Looked After; currently 13 young people were on a work experience placement. Young people who were homeless were unable to engage in education, employment and training, and a holistic package of services needed to be given to these young people before they could engage fully.

Initiatives were taking place in Basildon, with additional apprenticeship places. The Council was working with Basildon and Thurrock Colleges to provide courses. Vocational Centres worked with schools and colleges. Changes had taken place since the LSC funding had been withdrawn. The Local Authority has funded two Vocational Centres in Maldon and Canvey Island, and further centres were being developed in Chelmsford and Colchester.

Changes would take place to the leaving school age, in 2013 which would rise to 17 years old and in 2015 to 18 years old.

Essex Apprenticeships

A total of 120 young people were on an engineering apprenticeship in manufacturing for one year on a Level 2 NVQ scheme which was being funded by Essex County Council. A lot of work was taking place with vulnerable young people and in particular targeting care leavers. Some young people had been employed on coaching courses by Chelsea Football Club. There were 27 young people on a pre-apprentice course, preparing them for apprenticeships, where they have work experience and look to improve their numeracy and literacy skills. They also have team building sessions.

Young people had informed the Council that they want a job, and that apprenticeships should lead to jobs. Staff were working with employers to take on young people.

During discussion the following points were made:

- That the NEET team should work with younger children to prevent them from becoming NEET, as boys especially could disengage from age 8 or 9;
- That schools should offer both academic and vocational studies for young people as there was too great an emphasis on the academic route;
- A new Foundation Learning Qualification pilot would take place next year;
- The Plume School, Maldon was noted as having alternative activities for young people who were disengaged;

- Essex was working with business partners to provide extra apprenticeships;
- A private faculty in Essex had just received funding for apprenticeships on Level 2 Windscreen Fitting;
- That the college was responsible for training whilst the employer was responsible for providing the equipment and the cost of the wage;
- There was currently no NEET intervention for Year 6 pupils;
- That, when the placement breaks down, alternative placements were found to ensure that the young people could be re-employed and the training continued;
- That Westminster City Council had a similar problem to Tendring Council and intensively worked with 100 young people and their families. A similar scheme may well work in Essex;
- There were 40 Business Champions who were raising the aspirations of young people who find it difficult to find a job on their own;
- Swayne Park School, Rayleigh was running an Employment Charter, sponsored by businesses, for young people who could demonstrate that they could obtain general employment and were assessed through out the year. The young people work towards a Bronze, Silver or Gold award. This school had no NEET last summer;
- One young person who had been in care outside the County had been found an apprenticeship in East London where she now lived;
- The teams were currently not working with young people with disabilities, but would look into working with this group;
- 6.8% of young people were classified as NEET, which the team would like to reduce to 5%, although this would be difficult in the current economic climate. It was a challenging target;
- The Chairman urged Members to become involved in working with Businesses and Schools at a local level to give the team extra options;
- The Committee would like to visit an employer and apprentices.

The Committee **Agreed** that Members would visit an employer and apprentices, Peter Cook and Vivien Door would organise this.

The Chairman thanked Clare Kershaw and Peter Cook for their informative presentation.

17. **CRB /ISA/Registration / Vetting & Barring Scheme**

The Committee received a report, CYP/06/10, which was supported orally at the meeting by Patrick Sturch, ISA and Safeguarding HR Consultant and Janet Stevenson, Disclosure Manager.

Essex had still received only limited information from the Home Office regarding the regulations for ISAs. It was now promised for March. In December 2009 the Government reviewed the requirements to regulate any activity with children and vulnerable adults regarding the frequency of contact. If a person attended a specific school on a regular basis they would need to be vetted. If a person attended a range of schools on a regular basis they would not need to be vetted. The ISA would cost £64 per person, it was not known whether each person would have to pay for their own ISA or if the employer would pay this cost. School Governors would need to be ISA registered as they work with a specific school.

Members in a Local Authority who have clear education and or Social Care functions, for example Cabinet Members, would need to be vetted.

During discussion the following points were made:

- That ISA registration had monitoring whilst CRB checking was a snap shot on the day it was checked. There were significant advantages to this dual system;
- CRB checks would still need to continue as well as ISA's;
- The ISA vetting could be portable whereas the CRB check needs to be provided for each employer and voluntary sector worked in;
- Discussion was taking place nationally to amalgamate the CRB and the ISA;
- Tutors attending student's homes where they were home educated were covered. Any individual could regulate themselves, and could then opt to employ a tutor who was ISA registered.

The Chairman thanked Patrick Sturch and Janet Stevenson for their informative presentation.

18. Corporate Score Card

The Committee noted the December 2009 the Corporate Score Card, CYP/07/10, introduced by Graham Redgwell

Following discussion the Committee **Agreed** to invite Terry Reynolds and Debbie Holmes to a future meeting to discuss the education and attainment issues in more depth. The Committee would like comparative information, year by year, details from statistical neighbours and national indicators in order to get a clearer picture and consider what the greatest concern might be.

It was also agreed that a number of streams of work relating to healthy living should be considered in May 2010 and then be referred to a Task and Finish Group to look at in more detail.

19. Corporate Parenting Update

Due to adverse weather conditions in December 2009, the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel was deferred to Friday 5 February 2010. The Chairman would provide an update on this Panel at the Committee's March meeting.

20. Children Living in Caravans

The Chairman informed the Committee that Councillor Twitchen had received a response, from the Essex Housing Officers Group which would be sent to Members for their comments.

21. Unallocated Cases

The Chairman informed the Committee that the number of unallocated cases had reduced from 1,850 at the end of November 2009 to 908. The proportion relating to under two-year-olds had gone down from 185 to 52.

21. Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee received the future meeting dates report for 2010/11 from Vivien Door, Committee Officer.

The Committee **Agreed** the future meeting dates for 2010/11 and confirmed that they may comprise:

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

Thursday 4 March 2010

Thursday 1 April 2010

Thursday 3 June 2010

Thursday 1 July 2010

Thursday 2 September 2010

Thursday 7 October 2010

Thursday 4 November 2010

Thursday 2 December 2010

Thursday 6 January 2011

Thursday 3 February 2011

Thursday 3 March 2011

Thursday 7 April 2011

Thursday 12 May 2011

Members noted that no date had been set for May 2010. The usual meeting date (the first Thursday, could well be the date of the General Election. Members would be invited to confirm a date at the next meeting.

The meeting closed at 12.30 pm.

Chairman