

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY AND  
SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, ON THURSDAY  
7 FEBRUARY 2013**

County Councillors present:

T Chapman (Chairman)  
S Barker (Vice-Chairman)  
J Baugh  
A Brown  
R Callender  
J Deakin

I Grundy  
E Hart  
T Higgins (Vice Chairman)  
S Hillier  
D Morris

Non-Elected Voting Member present:

Mr R Carson

The following Members were also present:

Councillor R Gooding	Items 1-6
Councillor R Madden	Items 1-5
Councillor V Metcalfe	Items 1-7

The following officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Graham Redgwell	Governance Officer
Matthew Waldie	Committee Officer

The meeting opened at 10.00 am.

**1. Apologies and Substitutions**

The Committee Officer reported the receipt of the following apologies:

Apologies	Substitutes
Cllr L Mead	
Cllr T Sargent	
Cllr J Young	
Rev R Jordan	--

**2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no new declarations of interest.

**3 Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 January 2013 were approved, subject to a number of corrections, as a correct record and to be signed by the Chairman.

**4. Domestic Abuse**

Members received report CYP/04/13, providing background information and an update on the business case to reduce the level of Domestic Abuse in the

County. The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Kevin Nunn, Senior Policy and Strategy Manager, who introduced the item.

### Introduction

The business case was proposed under the Community Budgets proposal, which is one of 4 pilot schemes across the country. The principle is that better administration of budgets will lead to better outcomes. The second draft of the business case ties in with the decision-making process.

Of the 32,000 domestic abuse incidents recorded each year by Essex Police, about 23,000 involve children in some way, which means we can estimate that about 20,000 individual children will be involved altogether.

There is a clear link between exposure to domestic abuse and issues around child protection, so a priority is early intervention in such circumstances. A number of areas are being targeted and these are listed in the circulated paper, but Mr Nunn drew attention to some of the key proposals.

- Early detection is often possible via links with the Health Service. Dialogue is taking place with these services, to help them recognise potential problems.
- As far as housing is concerned, the current practice is normally to remove the victim from the home; but now consideration is sometimes given to removing the perpetrator, as having to relocate can cause all sorts of stress and difficulties for the victim. Clearly, this would not work in all cases, but is considered on a case by case basis.
- The management of perpetrators is crucial and Essex Police are drawing up a new perpetrators strategy.
- Developing a clear pathway for survivors, understood by professionals is seen as crucial, so, over the coming months, Essex Police, the County Council and other partners will be investing in a Central Referral Unit to facilitate the provision of help and advice to those involved in domestic violence.

### Discussion

Members raised some issues, to which Mr Nunn responded.

- Concern was expressed over the prospect of not moving the family, as security, especially for any children, is a priority for survivors. Mr Nunn pointed out that any cases would be very carefully assessed on an individual basis, and that where child contact was allowed changing address rarely added to long term safety of the survivor.
- The need for buy-in from the districts was recognised. They need to be made aware of the economic impact of domestic violence (eg, on their own housing services). Each district has its own approach and the County Council needs to cooperate with them. Housing Officers have been involved in discussions to date.

- The need to provide therapy for perpetrators was recognised, to curtail their activities. There are 2,300 domestic abuse cases brought to court per year; of these, about 100 individuals complete mandated programmes. The County Council would like to extend this, but each individual course costs £2-5k.
- A question was asked about different family situations in which violence occurred. The question couldn't be answered directly, however, one statistic was available: in 60% of police domestic abuse incidents, the victim and perpetrator do not live together.
- It is not clear how male survivors fit in with the refuge system, but it is clear that 25% of police incident survivors are male, and that 6% of this group relate to male to male violence (eg, son-father). The Police do risk assessments and it is clear that male survivors have a much lower risk profile than female survivors. This is an area being looked at in more detail.
- The number of women from out of County staying in Essex refuges is about 50% of the total, but the number of Essex women in refuges out of County is also 50%, so this balances out.
- Not every district provides funding for the refuges within their own area. The County Council will be bringing district councils together to discuss joint commissioning of refuge services.
- The use of any savings made under the new arrangements will be assessed as they arise.
- Data sharing will be crucial, and the principle for this will need to be made clear as early as possible.

The Chairman thanked Mr Nunn for his attendance and helpful replies. She confirmed the Committee's wish to see progress here and asked for the following information at a future update:

- a) Information on how any savings are used
- b) Data on sharing and performance
- c) The level and nature of district council involvement
- d) Information on housing issues
- e) Information on any pilot schemes and outcomes.

It was also **Agreed** to bring the discussion to the attention of the Cabinet Member for Procurement.

## 5. Children's Partnership review

Members received a verbal update on the Children's Partnership Review from Roger Bullen, Head of Joint Arrangements.

It was confirmed that a review took place in September/October 2012, looking particularly at the impact of the Health & Wellbeing Board, the statutory status of the Children and Young People Plan, and guidance provided in respect of Children's Trust Boards. The intention was to ensure that future arrangements provide adequate support for the children's agenda. A wide range of stakeholders was consulted.

One conclusion is that partnership arrangements should be retained. There is no longer a need for a Children's Trust Board but there will be an Executive Board, which will report to the Health & Wellbeing Board. Locality Boards will be retained, and will report to the Health & Wellbeing Board, through the Executive Board.

There is a statutory requirement to bring the various bodies together, but considerable flexibility of approach is permitted. The commissioning elements will need to feature largely within the new arrangements and fulfil any statutory requirements. There will be an "equivalent" to the CYP Plan( a formal plan is no longer required).

The process of change is underway at present, with the new terms of reference for the Partnership Executive due to be approved shortly.

Concern was expressed by Members about the limited information received on Children's Partnerships to date.

The Committee **Agreed** that, once the new arrangements have been confirmed, Mr Bullen should be asked to:

- Produce a chart showing the future structure of children's partnership arrangements
- Produce a paper giving further explanation of these
- Report regularly to meetings of the Committee on progress.

The Chairman thanked Mr Bullen and looked forward to receiving his report.

It was **Agreed** that those involved in planning the induction process for Members after the May election should be asked to incorporate a session on the subject in the induction programme.

## **6. Analysis of 2012 school performance**

Members received report CYP/05/13, providing information on performance levels in Essex schools in 2012. The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Tim Coulson, Director for Education and Learning, who introduced the item.

The Essex results are in line with the national average and, in general, results have improved, also in line with the national average. The wish is that Essex should be in the top quartile, so considerable improvements are required in a number of areas.

Particularly noted was the judicial review of the English GCSE grading exercise, which has impacted negatively on the results. Also noted was poor performance overall in the new Phonics Test for children entering Key Stage 1.

Mr Coulson then responded to Members' concerns and questions and indicated that:

- The County Council would like to follow up these results school by school. About 60% of Essex schools are rated good or outstanding, which is below the national average. In a national comparison, Essex came bottom of the 4<sup>th</sup> division (out of 5)
- 180 schools are in the “satisfactory” category. Their standards must be raised, so every one of these has been offered a written analysis, consultancy on their improvement plan and Ofsted-type assessments
- Primary schools have seen more success. There have been 45 Ofsted inspections since September 2012. Half of those previously graded satisfactory have moved to good; one third have remained the same; 6 have dropped to unsatisfactory – these last are being looked at very closely. Mr Coulson did not believe in the necessarily overriding effect of geographical and demographic elements, citing examples of both good and poor performers within the same area.
- Evidence does not suggest that Nursery education is poor, as the proportion of nurseries rated good or outstanding (85%) is above the national average. However, there are two big issues:
  - i. The transition from nursery to primary school; this does not seem to work very well, with continuity poor.
  - ii. The relatively low take-up of nursery provision. Nationally, the assumption is that 90% of 3 year olds will take up their free 15 hours per week; in Essex the figure is 84%, and this shows when they begin primary school. The challenge is to increase this take up, particularly with those families less likely to do well.
- With regard to the Pupil Premium, the money is not ring-fenced and so can be used in any way the school wishes, but there is an expectation that schools should be able to demonstrate what they are doing to raise pupils’ performance levels.

Concerns were expressed by Members over standards of writing and literacy, and over the way teachers were regularly obliged to enforce changes in curriculum . Mr Coulson agreed these were a real issue for schools, but he suggested that there is an increasing importance given to accurate spelling and there is greater expectation in the actual results of teaching rather than the particular teaching process itself.

The importance of good leadership was also commented upon. Mr Coulson confirmed there are development and support programmes, especially for head and deputy head teachers in the early stages – a particularly important time. The Council also offers support to governing bodies wishing to make appointments, should they wish to use it.

The Chairman thanked Mr Coulson for his contribution. She asked him:

- i. To supply the figures once more, but broken down to show data at a much lower level
- ii. To come back to the Committee (or any successor body), to report on the outcome of the Judicial Review and its implications on the data submitted today.

## 7. SEN Task & Finish Group

Councillor Higgins confirmed that the Task & Finish Group is due to meet again in March. She asked Members to provide responses to the questionnaire produced by the County Council, to assist them in their work. *[Details sent to all Members by the Governance Officer.]*

## 8. Safeguarding

Members received a brief oral report from Councillor Hillier, as a Vice Chairman of the Families Safeguarding Sub-Committee.

She confirmed that the Sub-Committee had a stocktaking meeting in January, and that a fuller report would be produced for CYP and COP shortly.

## 9. Forward Look

The agenda items already agreed by the Committee for the next meeting were reaffirmed.

**For March 2013 it was agreed that there would be three substantial items:**

- Youth Centres
- Youth Strategy Groups
- YEA work streams.

It was noted that this meeting would probably require an afternoon session to cover all items, and that some representatives of the YEA would be in attendance for some of the time. Members were asked to reserve a full day in their diaries.

The Chairman proposed, and Members **Agreed**, that there should be no meeting in April, as it would fall in the lead-up period to the County Council elections on 2 May.

It was also suggested that the first meeting after the Elections, which was scheduled for Thursday 6 June, should be aimed at providing an update on issues relating to children and young people. This should particularly benefit any new Members. It was also noted, however, that there would probably be changes made to the overall structure of the scrutiny committees after the elections and that the suggestion might need to be carried forward to a new structure and on a different date.

## 10. Date of next meeting

The Committee confirmed the date of the next scheduled meeting as Thursday 7 March 2013. This will be held at 10.00 am in Committee Room 1, with a Members' pre-meeting at 9.30am.

The meeting closed at 12.00 noon.

Chairman