

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

Membership

Councillors

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

Non-Elected Voting Members

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

(* 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

22. Apologies

The Committee Officer reported the receipt of the following apologies:

Apologies	Substitutes
Cllr K Twitchen	Cllr J Knapman
Cllr L Dangerfield	
Cllr A Brown	
Cllr R Pearson	
Mr O Richards	
Cllr S Mayzes	

23. 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; as Member of the Children's Centre Partnership Board, (Strategic Group) and Vice Chairmanship of The Corporate Parenting Panel.
Cllr J Baugh	Personal interest as Member of the Braintree District Children's Centres Partnership.

Cllr D Morris	Personal interest as Member of the Adoption and Foster Panel.
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24. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 February 2010 were approved as a correct record.

25. Matters Arising

Minute 16, Young People Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), Essex Apprenticeships. The Committee Officer confirmed that she was still obtaining Members preferences for the visit to Apprenticeships which would be arranged in conjunction with Peter Cook, Assistant Director, Skills & International Trade.

26. Review of Carers Support across South Essex Scrutiny Report

The Committee received report CYP/09/10, introduced by David Moses, Head of Member Support and Governance Councillor Howard, the Chairman of the Forum which carried out the scrutiny sent his apologies. This report had been to the Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting on 3 March and had been endorsed. It would also be taken to the Community Wellbeing and Older People Policy and Scrutiny Committee on 11 March to be endorsed insofar as that Committee was concerned.

This Committee considered Recommendations 1, 2 and 3, which particularly related to young people.

Recommendation 1

Consideration should be given to the provision of support within schools for young carers who were not able to attend young carer groups.

The Task and Finish Group had been very impressed with the clubs which the Young Carers could attend but there was a waiting list. It was hoped that Schools could provide extra support to these young people whilst on the waiting lists.

Recommendation 2

Elected Members should visit the Young Carers Clubs to support the young people and the staff, who were providing this vital service.

There had been good feedback from both Young Carers and staff when Members visited these clubs offering their support. It had been proposed that all Members should visit Young Carer Clubs to give their support.

Recommendation 3

Consideration should be given to making the Link Bus available to young carers.

During a discussion the following points were made:

- That Young Carers were often more mature than their peers, and they may need counselling services within the schools;

- Members were concerned that no one had “ownership” of the recommendation for all Members to visit the Young Carers Clubs;
- Members required details of these Young Carers Clubs in their areas;
- Members were concerned that public transport was crucial for Young Carers who may need practical help with the cost of the transport, for example, possibly providing them with free travel;
- The report and recommendations would be sent to NHS Chairmen and Chief Executives and the Cabinet Members requesting a response by June 2010 as to whether they accept the recommendations.

The Committee **Endorsed** this report subject to the following additions:

- Free public transport be provided for these Young Carers;
- Young Carers who were waiting to attend these clubs were offered extra support services by their schools, for example, counselling;
- The Chairman and Vice Chairmen of the Committee to agree a Member visiting process, where officers were proactively informing Members of the details of these clubs and ensuring that Member visits take place.

The Chairman thanked David Moses for his presentation.

27. Educational Provision for Looked After Children and Excluded Children

The Committee considered an oral report on the Educational Provision for Looked After Children (LAC) and Excluded Children, from Terry Reynolds, Director for Learning School Improvement and Early Years.

Statistical Data

Statistical results for LAC for 2009 were provided, as follows:

	Target	Actual
Level 4 in Key Stage 2 English	59.3% (based on individual pupils)	43.0%
Level 4 in Key Stage 2 Maths	61.6% (based on individual pupils)	46.0%
Sit at least one GCSE	74.0%	73.0%
5 A* to C	-	16.5%
5 A* to G	-	47.8%
1 A* to G	-	72.2%
Missed 25 or more days at school	13.5% Government set	13.3% This figure had been reduced by 4% in last year

National comparators would not be available until April at the earliest.

Excluded Children

The Behaviour and Attendance Partnerships had improved the position by looking at children who were at risk of being excluded. Schools now have managed moves to other schools. These moves were agreed by the parents,

schools and pupils to provide the pupils with a fresh start at another school. Pupils could also be transferred to Pupil Referral Units to work on their behaviour and then transfer back to their original school or the new school at the beginning of a new or half term. This process had reduced the level of exclusions to below 5% across Essex. None of these exclusions involved LAC.

Conclusions

In receiving the statistical data, there was no single reason why these had not improved. However, the targets set in Key Stage 2 were aspiration targets set by the teachers four to five terms before the test was taken and may therefore be optimistic. There was limited data from schools.

Children and Young People who were settled in Foster Homes did better than Children and Young People in Residential Homes. It was clear that Personal Educational Plans needed more back up and planning.

There was a partnership between Childrens Homes and Schools and up to 10 hours one-to-one tuition was provided by qualified teachers for all children who were not attaining their predicted levels. This was being funded by the Standards Fund and was proving to be very beneficial to the children included.

Placements for LAC in schools in the normal admission round were not a problem but children's placements break down at different times of the year, and then it could be difficult to obtain a place at a different school for the child or young person. Looked After Children could also have Special Educational Needs and statementing a child was complex and takes time. Schools do not have the right to refuse Looked After Children unless the school was full but good schools would mainly be full. Therefore Looked After Children moving to a new school outside of the admission round may be placed in schools that were not attaining as highly.

Discussion

During discussion the following points were made:

- That there was a problem from children already achieving above Level 2 at the end of Key Stage 1, and questions raised as to whether those pupils were encouraged to attain an improvement commensurate to their ability;
- That Looked After Children gravitate to vocational training but should be encouraged to have aspirations to obtain an academic course where appropriate;
- That Looked After Children cannot be included in the statistics if they were being educated outside Essex but those non Essex children who were being educated in Essex were counted in the general figures;
- Members were very concerned that children in Residential Homes were sometimes not attending schools or attaining as well as they might;
- Children in Residential Homes were often the most damaged or have a disability;
- That there was a joint weekly referral panel for statement decisions, and that a non County placement might be suitable in some instances;
- That children and Young People in Residential Homes should be given both emotional support and encouraged to attend school and attain well;
- That it was important for Members to discuss educational issues with staff when visiting Childrens Homes;

- There was a promotion to find extra Foster Carers to provide homes for these children.

The Chairman thanked Terry Reynolds for this information. Issues raised would be considered as part of the Committee forthcoming review of its Forward Look.

28. Corporate Score Card

The Committee received an oral update on the Corporate Score Card on educational attainment issues from Terry Reynolds, Director for Learning School Improvement and Early Years. Also circulated was the Corporate Card presented to the February meeting, CYP/07/10.

NI 72, Achievement of at least 78 points across the Early Years Foundation Stage with 6 in PSED and CLL

Essex had improved slowly over the last three years. However other Authorities had done the same and Essex was now 128 out of 150 Local Authorities. This Indicator measured 3-5 year old children's experiences and learning, for example, learning to talk effectively. Early parenting impacts significantly on children's experiences. Over 90% of 3-5 year olds were in educational settings, and clearly, the quality of these settings had not been good enough. This then impacted on schools where reception results had not been good enough.

During discussion the following points were made:

- That 98% of children in the age group were now in "educational settings";
- That the quality of parenting impacts significantly on these figures. If children live in areas of deprivation then their parents may find parenting difficult;
- That one working parent does not necessarily lift the family out of economic deprivation but two working parents may;
- Child Centres were very successful for children if they could access them.

NI 73, Achievement at level 4 or above in both English and Maths at Key Stage 2

Key Stage 2 figures in Essex were always close to national and statistical neighbours trends. The focus was on schools operating below the floor target.

NI 75, Achievement of 5 or more A*- C grades at GCSE or equivalent including English and Maths

Essex attainment had improved but not as much as its national or statistical neighbours. It was now over 50% for the first time. Of concern, was that 40% of secondary schools were in the bottom 25% for adding contextual value. It was significantly worse for children with Special Education Needs than for other pupils.

NI 78, Reduction in number of schools where fewer than 30% of pupils achieve 5 or more A*- C grades at GCSE and equivalent including GCSEs in English and Maths

Previously discussed earlier in the meeting.

NI 92, Early Years achievement gap at age 5 - reducing the gap between the lowest achieving 20% and the average at early years Foundation Stage

Essex had been one of the few Local Authorities that narrowed the gap and had moved up from 105 in 2007 to 87 in 2009, out of 150 authorities.

NI 93, Progression by 2 levels in English between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and NI 94, Progression by 2 levels in Maths between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2

These indicators were set nationally. One to one tuition would be given to pupils who were not attaining well. The biggest problem was encouraging pupils who attain level 3 at Key Stage 1 to obtain level 5.

The Chairman thanked Terry Reynolds for his information. Again, issues raised would be considered as part of the Committee's forthcoming review of its Forward Look.

29. Badman Task and Finish Group

The Committee received an update report on the work of this Group by its Chairman Revd P Trathen.

Draft Terms of Reference were tabled at the meeting. Details were given of a set of questions which had been sent to the Cabinet Member for Education and the 2012 Games.

During the discussion the following points were made:

- That the draft Terms of Reference had been drafted in discussion with the Governance Officer;
- That, although a Scoping Document was not agreed in advance, the Group had acted legally and appropriately in commencing its work;
- There could be significant safeguarding issues around educating children at home. Therefore, the Cabinet Member for Children's Services should also be involved in the Groups work.

The Committee **Agreed:**

- i) The Terms of Reference as now circulated;
- ii) That the Governance Officer should contact the Cabinet Members for Education and the 2012 Games and Children's Services to advise them of the Groups status and the work it was undertaking.

30. Corporate Parenting Update

The Committee received an update report on Corporate Parenting issues from Councillor Riley and on the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting held on 15 March 2010.

31. Forward Look

The Forward Look agreed in December 2009 was re-circulated and introduced by Graham Redgwell, Governance Officer.

It was **Agreed** that this should be updated and that Members should give further thought to issues they would wish to be discussed in the period up to the end of 2010.

32. Dates of Future Meetings

The Committee confirmed the dates of future meetings and noted that they may comprise:

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

Thursday 1 April 2010

Thursday 13 May 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

The meeting closed at 12.45 pm.

Chairman