

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE POLICY
AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD AT COUNTY HALL, CHELMSFORD, ON
THURSDAY 3 NOVEMBER 2011**

Membership

Councillors

* J Aldridge (Chairman)	* J Knapman
* S Barker	* R Madden
* J Baugh	S Mayzes
J Deakin	* D Morris
* I Grundy	* R Pearson
* E Hart	* C Riley (Vice-Chairman)
* T Higgins (Vice-Chairman)	* T Sargent
* S Hillier	* J Young

Non-Elected Voting Members

Mr R Carson	Reverend P Trathen
<i>Vacant</i>	Ms M Uzzell
(* present)	

Named Substitute Elected Members

R Callender	* M Fisher
K Twitchen	

The following Members were also present:

Councillor A Brown	
Councillor W Dick	(Item 81)
Councillor J Pike	(Items 77-81)

The following officers were present in support throughout the meeting:

Graham Redgwell	Governance Officer
Matthew Waldie	Committee Officer

The meeting opened at 10.30 am.

77. Apologies and Substitutions

The Committee Officer reported the receipt of the following apologies:

Apologies	Substitutes
Cllr J Deakin	Cllr M Fisher
Mr R Carson	--
Rev P Trathen	--

78. Declarations of Interest

The following standing declarations of interest were recorded:

Cllr J Baugh	Personal interest as Member of Braintree District's Children's Partnership; has also served on the Panel.
Cllr T Higgins	Personal interest as Chairman of the Board of Colchester YMCA, which shares a Chief Executive with Chelmsford YMCA, which runs children's centres in Chelmsford.
Cllr C Riley	Personal interest as Member of the sub-group maintaining centres in the south of the county.
Cllr T Sargent	Personal interest as Member of the sub-group maintaining centres in the north of the county.

79. Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of the Children and Young People Policy and Scrutiny Committee held on 29 September 2011 were approved as a correct record.

80. Matters Arising/Chairman's report

- a) Membership of the Committee. The Chairman confirmed that the County Council meeting on 11 October 2011 had approved the appointment of Councillors Ian Grundy and Sandra Hillier as members of the Committee.
- b) Non-elected vacancy on Committee (Minute 69c/ 29 September 2011) The Governance Officer informed the Committee that Stuart Geddes, a parent governor at Barnes Farm Infants School, Chelmsford, had received the most votes and would become the representative for primary schools. He added that Mark Christmas, of Robert Drake Primary School, Thundersley, had received the next highest number of votes, and he proposed inviting Mr Christmas to act as a substitute for Mr Geddes. The Committee endorsed this approach.
- c) Eating disorders. The Chairman confirmed that this would form an agenda item for a future meeting of the Committee.
- d) Apprenticeship and Children's Centre visits (Minute 69e/29 September 2011). This was being progressed.

81. Children's Centres

The Committee considered a report (CYP/31/11), providing information on the Prevention and Early Help Strategy for Children, and providing the overarching context for the other papers, namely a Policy and Scoping Document, a report giving further information on Children's Centres ("Appendix A") and the Service Specification for the future organisation of such Centres.

Wendi Ogle-Welbourn, Director for Commissioning, SCF Directorate, and Carolyn Terry, Strategy Manager Commissioning, Early Years & Childcare Commissioning, gave a brief presentation on Children's Centres.

Members noted several principal changes to the provision of Children's Centres, the first was that it was now Quadrant based, with four contracts coming into effect in April 2012.

Although the need to provide sufficient Centres across the County, and the need to comply with Ofsted requirements both remained, the grant was no longer ring fenced and the Council was no longer obliged to provide a universal service. This meant that provision could be targeted in accordance with local needs.

In future, there would be a focus on the hardest to reach groups, with social workers working from centres. Performance would be monitored, using several indicators and , dedicated contract managers, with reporting to local Commissioning and Delivery Boards.

The Committee noted the intended changes and the aspirational nature of these, acknowledging that the service should not only improve but should provide better value for money.

[A more detailed report on this subject has been prepared – Governance Officer]

82. Anti-bullying issues

The Committee considered Report CYP/32/11, which provided an update on anti-bullying work with the Essex Youth Scrutiny Committee (EYSC) and Young Essex Assembly (YEA).

Julie Keating, Principal Officer (Anti Bullying and BAPs), Ralph Holloway, Team Manager, Children's Support Service, and Sherilyn Turkington, YEA Co-ordinator, Commissioning, were in attendance. Ms Keating reminded Members that a YEA anti-bullying subgroup had been formed to look into this issue, which continued to be the one considered most important to young people.

Three particular issues had been noted by the subgroup:

- Pupils wanted assistance on how to deal with bullying.
- They wanted teachers to demonstrate greater tolerance of differences.
- Teachers themselves wanted more support and guidance.

The Committee noted several points:

- Projects are underway in each of the above areas, drawing on the resources of concerned organisations such as Kidscape (the Government funded charity) and Stonewall, as well as ECC itself.

- Essex has no statutory obligation to provide resourcing for this; but schools must be the first port of call in dealing with the problem, and Essex can draw on a wealth of experience and provide considerable assistance to schools.
- Essex does not charge for its services at present, but this is under review. Many schools themselves have demonstrated considerable commitment, in being prepared to pay for teachers to cover for staff on courses. However, there were also a good number of schools which do not admit to having a bullying problem.
- The Committee noted that an anti-bullying conference would be taking place on 18 November, marking the end of anti-bullying week. Ms Turkington agreed to circulate details of relevant events in future.

[A more detailed report on this subject has been prepared – Governance Officer]

83. Refreshing the corporate vision and values

The Committee noted Report CYP/33/11, which set out the County Council's proposed new corporate vision, to replace the EssexWorks vision programme, which comes to an end in March 2012. Ellie Sapsed, Senior Policy and Strategy Officer, Policy Unit – PCPR, was in attendance. She reminded Members that they had all had the opportunity to respond to this proposal individually, but this allowed them to respond as a Committee.

The Committee made the following response:

- All members are aware of the consultation process and the opportunity to comment individually.
- It is accepted that this is a broad brush document with very general statements. However, given the huge significance of the problems on children's safeguarding that the Council has had to face for some time, and which will be a major priority into the future, it would seem sensible that the statement 'Protecting and Safeguarding Vulnerable People' should be broadened out and specifically mention children as well.
- The terms 'Children Looked After' or 'Looked After Children' should not be used anywhere in the Vision Document. The recognised term now used is 'Children in Care'.

Ms Sapsed confirmed that the Committee's comments would be taken into account before the new vision was submitted to Council in December 2011 for approval.

84. Corporate Parenting

The Committee received an oral update from Councillor Riley. He informed Members that he would shortly circulate the outcomes from Officer Regulation 33 Visits and Member Visits to Children's Homes for September 2011. Members also noted the success of the Children in Care football tournament held at Great Baddow.

Members requested a brief paper on the role and activities of the Corporate Parenting Panel. Councillor Riley AGREED to provide this for Members' information.

85. Forward Look

The Committee noted that the item on the Impact of Academies, to which Councillor Castle would be invited, would not be considered in December but at a later meeting – possibly January or February 2012.

It was also noted that better scrutiny could be achieved by reducing the number of topics.

86. Dates of Future Meetings 2011/12

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

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

Thursday 1 December 2011

Thursday 5 January 2012

Thursday 2 February 2012

Thursday 1 March 2012

Thursday 5 April 2012

Thursday 10 May 2012

The meeting closed at 12.45 pm.

Chairman