

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Minutes of the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee
held on Tuesday, 8th August 2011 at 6.00 p.m. in the Reception Suite, Civic
Offices, Telford

PRESENT: Councillors G. Green (Chairman), S. Burrell, J. Greenaway, K. Guy, J. Loveridge, A. Mackenzie, C. Turley, Co-optees A. Atkinson, M. Ward.

Also Present: Councillor P. Watling (Cabinet Member Children & Young People); Cllr. A. England; Laura Johnston, Interim Director of Children's Services; Clive Jones, Head of Family & Community Services; Stephanie Jones, Interim Scrutiny Group Specialist.

CYPSC-1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Councillor M. Ion, Co-optees S. Ali, S. Harris, E. Ofori, Jim Collins, Head of School Improvement.

CYPSC-2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CYPSC-3 CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and made some opening remarks. The role of the Committee is to review and monitor services provided to the 38,000 children and young people in the borough to ensure the Council is doing its best for them, and to suggest ways that services could be improved within the available resources. A key area of work would be to continue to monitor services to the 280 children and young people within the authority's care, in line with the statutory duty all elected members have as corporate parents. The Committee brings together a wealth of skills and experience in elected members and co-optees.

For the benefit of new members, the Scrutiny Group Specialist explained the role of co-optees on the Committee.

- There are four statutory co-opted members:
 - A secondary Parent Governor Representative (PGR) (Emma Ofori) and a primary PGR (Mel Ward). The PGRs are primarily to represent parents rather than governors.
 - Representatives the Church of England diocese (vacant) and the Catholic diocese (Austin Atkinson) as they have maintained schools within the authority area.

The statutory co-optees have voting rights on education matters.

- There are currently three non-statutory co-optees:
 - A Higher Education representative (Shaukat Ali)
 - A school head-teacher representative (Sue Harris)
 - A young people's representative (Phoebe Lill)The non-statutory co-optees do not have voting rights

CYPSC-4 CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE REVIEW

The Cabinet member made some opening remarks. He welcomed the appointment of Laura Johnston as Interim Director of Children's Services. The Council was facing significant budget cuts and the focus of the service review was on finding new ways of delivering services so that the best possible services to children and young people could be maintained. The Cabinet member commended the dedication of staff.

The Interim Director of Children's Services explained that the service review was now in Phase 2 with proposals due to be launched in October. The staffing restructure from Phase 1 was going on. A discussion with scrutiny about the proposals would be welcomed.

The Head of Family & Community Services presented an update on the service review and structure proposals from Phase 1 of the Family & Community, Safeguarding, School Improvement Service Review. In addition to the presentation circulated with the papers for the meeting, an update report on the Review of Services for Care & Support, Children, Families & Schools (which is combined with the Adult Care & Support) was tabled which reflected the changes made through the consultation process.

The service review dated back to July 2010 as a whole-scale review of children's and adult services. The process had involved widespread engagement with staff, independent critical challenge and consideration of service issues, the financial position and anticipated government policy. Early issues had been identified as silo working, complex and ineffective communication between staff in clusters and partners, confused service access points putting additional pressure on social services, and "baton passing" - all of which had contributed to higher cost outcomes.

The key principles behind the service review were effective early intervention and prevention, with a focus on self-help and self service, to achieve better outcomes and savings. The Family Connect model would provide a single, integrated point of access for all services. The Contact Centre would take all calls, manage routine enquiries, or refer calls to a multi-agency triage team made up of appropriately trained staff from a range of partners. The triage team would put in place the appropriate intervention. Safeguarding issues would go straight to the safeguarding team. This would be supported by a CRM system with a single electronic view so that addresses with multiple needs could be picked up. The aim was to identify issues early on and put in place the appropriate preventative intervention.

Staffing structures had been rationalised and brought together. Managers were working more closely together with a 2 weekly meeting.

A schools partnership trust model was being developed to support greater collaboration between schools to improve learning and achievement.

Phase 1 of the proposals had been launched in February for 90 days consultation and had received overwhelming support for the majority of the proposals. The management structure was now in place to deliver the services and was shown in the report.

Phase 2 proposals for the rest of the workforce would be launched on 18th October for 90 days consultation and could be brought to scrutiny as part of the consultation process.

In the restructure the number of managers had been reduced by half. Current services would continue to run until March 2012 and the changes would be introduced in April 2012.

The members asked a number of questions about the proposals.

- **Regarding the education and employment offer, how is the employment aspect of getting young people into work picked up in the structure, and is this within the remit of this Committee?**

The School Improvement team under Jim Collins and the Employment & Skills team under Peter Smith work closely together and there are regular management meetings. The School Improvement team is focussing on the 14-19 agenda. Issues relating to getting young people into employment would fall within the remit of this Committee.

- **How will the Co-operative Commission affect the service review, and how were members of the Co-operative Commission selected (i.e. are you communicating with all schools including trust boards and academies)?**

The process for selecting Commissioners for the Co-operative Commission was inclusive. The schools trust partnership will involve all schools, although is targeting the trust boards in the first instance.

- **With regard to the 14-19 agenda, there were some serious potential investors involved with the University Technical College proposal earlier this year. What is the current position on this?**

The University Technical College is one model for delivering the 14-19 agenda suggested by the government. All models are now being considered for what is best and most sustainable for Telford & Wrekin. Any plans will be consulted on widely and with people with the right skills and experience. The Head of School Improvement would be able to provide more information.

- **Trust schools are statutorily accountable for academic performance but they also have a duty to educate in social standards and skills. Can the school Trust model be developed to include accountability for social skills education as there is a currently a gap here?**

We would see this as an element to be enriched and will be pushing for this. Under the Trust model, schools are more accountable for academic achievement than social skills but this is influenced by national legislation. We want to build a good relationship with the trust schools and to involve local communities with these kinds of issues.

- **If there are emergency situations which occur out of hours (for example from children and young people left on their own) when the contact centre is closed, who would people call in these circumstances?**

Some services will need to work non-traditional hours and we will work with partners on this. Currently people call the police in emergency situations who then contact the out of hours emergency duty service.

The Chairman suggested that information about emergency contact numbers should be disseminated to all elected members, and that a Members' Information Seminar should be provided at the appropriate time to make members aware of the service changes.

- **How confident are you that the police refer calls, especially from children, to the emergency duty team?**
Data is available and reported in the annual report. The Interim Director was confident that the police respond to emergencies immediately for example two children had recently come into care through police protection orders.
- **What is the schools trust partnership, and what effect will it have in future?**
The schools trust partnership model is being developed and it is about effecting greater co-operation and collaboration between schools, and their local communities. Secondary trust schools will be targeted in the first instance, but we aim to work with all schools to support learning to create a level playing field for children and young people across the borough. It is at an early stage of development, and the Head of School Improvement would be able to provide more information.
- **Are there similar models in other authorities?**
This is new in Telford. There is a mix of different types of schools across the borough and we will take an inclusive approach in its development.

RESOLVED –

That the Phase 2 proposals would be brought to the Committee after 18th October to review during the consultation period.

CYPSC-5 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the suggestions and issues carried over from previous scrutiny arrangements in Appendix 1 of the report on the 2011/12 Work Programme and discussed which items to include in the work programme.

Cllrs. Burrell and Guy left the meeting at 7.00p.m.

RESOLVED –

- **That the items shown in Appendix 1 of these minutes would be included in the work programme, or otherwise dealt with as shown.**
- **That the next 2 meetings would be held at 6.00pm on 19th September and 20th October.**

Other meeting dates would be agreed with the Committee by e-mail.

The meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.

Chairman:

Date:

Appendix 1

Work Programme

	Suggestion	Agreed	Comments
1	Youth Services	Include in the work programme as a key review.	Expand scope to the youth offer and link to the service review of youth provision. Need to identify what cyp want. Needs further scoping.
2	Corporate Parenting (CP)– Members' role	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include 2 meetings with CIC (or care leavers) in the work programme • Include 2 dedicated CP meetings in the work programme to follow-up on issues from meetings with CIC, and to review other CP items agreed by members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Committee should pursue the aim of making CP training mandatory for elected members • Members need further discussion to agree the items/monitoring information for CP meetings - the new Corporate Parenting Strategy is being developed – this can come to the committee to help members decide what to review • LJ will ask the Participation Worker to get feedback from the CIC/care leavers about how they want to meet scrutiny members
3	CP – foster carers	As 2	Noted there has been very good work in recruiting/retaining foster carers
4	CP – social workers	As 2	Noted there is a national shortage of social workers which impacts and is difficult to influence
5	CP - safeguarding	As 2	A peer review and recent inspection showed substantial improvements in safeguarding – to be discussed further at CP meeting
6	School Improvement Team	Include in the work programme	Noted it will be some time before services are developed sufficiently to come to scrutiny – suggested timing March/April 2012
7	Short Breaks for disabled children	Include in the work programme as a key review.	Needs to be scoped. Consider mandatory/non-mandatory requirements, support for families, views of cyp.
8	Access to library/leisure facilities at HLC	Not included in the work programme	Refer to Co-operative & Communities Scrutiny Committee
9	Child Poverty	Include in the work programme as a key review.	Needs further scoping. – Report of meeting of officers and members on child poverty to come to Committee

			<p>– Link into existing work streams – possibly Co-operative Commission</p> <p>Members' views expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review should consider how child poverty is identified and equity of provision across the borough • Review should look forward at how we can help improve the chances of yp getting into employment • Review should look at immediate problems of child poverty
10	CYP service review	Include in work programme	After 18 th October
11	BSF programme	Include in the work programme	Update report as soon as possible – focus on risks Possibly receive periodic reviews/updates when decisions are made
12	Contact issues for CIC	As 2	
13	Adoption service premises	Not included in the work programme	Request written update from head of joint adoption service
14	UK YP	Not included in the work programme	Chairman to approve letter and send to schools
15	CP – placement stability	As 2	
16	CP education attainment	As 2	