

SCRUTINY COMMISSION 1
CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE

Minutes of a meeting of Scrutiny Commission 1 held on Monday 14th April 2008 at 6.00 pm in the Reception Suite, Civic Offices, Telford

PRESENT – Councillors J.A.Francis (Chairman), G.M.Green (Vice-Chairman), M.J.Smith, E.M.Swift and K.L.Tomlinson and Mr.G.Raxster (CE Lichfield Diocesan Representative), Mr.A.Atkinson (RC Diocese Representative) and Mrs.S.Harris (Primary Headteacher Representative).

OTHER MEMBERS PRESENT – Councillor S.P.Burrell – Cabinet Member: Children & Young People and K.S.Sahota.

OFFICERS PRESENT – Julia Almond – Corporate Director: Children & Young People, Barbara Evans – Head of Safeguarding & Corporate Parenting, Richard Lansdale – Business Manager – Disabled Children, Sarah Mulcuck – Joint Commissioning Manager for Disabled Children, Sarah Morris – Scrutiny Officer and Andrew Roberts – Democratic Services Officer.

SC1-42 **MINUTES**

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Commission held on 21st January 2008 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

SC1-43 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Revd I.Terry (CE Hereford Diocesan Representative), Mrs.M.Ward (Primary Parent Governor Representative) and Mrs M Sedgebeer (Primary Teacher Representative).

SC1-44 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP**

Councillor J.A.Francis – Chairman Group 1 and 2 Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership and Member Shropshire Private Nurseries Association.

Councillor G.M.Green – Governor – Abraham Darby Specialist School for the Performing Arts.

Councillor M.J.Smith – Trustee Hadley Under Fives and Governor – Hadley Learning Community.

Councillor E.M.Swift – Governor – William Reynolds Infant School and Haughton School.

Councillor K.L.Tomlinson – Governor – Charlton School.

SC1-45 **OVERVIEW OF PERFORMANCE 2007/2008 AND KEY TARGETS IN THE CHILDRENS & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN FOR 2008/2009**

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Julia Almond Corporate Director: Children & Young People together with Councillor S.P.Burrell Cabinet Member: Children & Young People.

Councillor Burrell highlighted the current work that was being undertaken which was leading towards the completion of the current Vision 2026 the principal aims of which

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was to provide a modern learning city with first class facilities and give all children and young people the best possible start in life. Both of these would be underpinned through the establishment of the Learning Communities within the Campus Telford & Wrekin and also with the further developments for prevention and early intervention within families. A further aspect would be the delivery of curriculum personalisation and it was confirmed that the Council was in the receipt of a further two years funding in order to develop this aspect further. It was also stated that the Council considered it to be absolutely vital that the existing partnerships within the clusters should be continued and developed further.

The key strengths of the portfolio included the integrated multi-agency working with excellent partnership relations, a committed workforce, that benefits had arisen from the involvement of children & young people, innovation particularly the Pathfinder scheme which provided short breaks for disabled children, ICT for schools and the Culture Zone.

At this point Julia Almond – Corporate Director: Children & Young People referred the Commission to a presentation during which she would provide an overview of performance during 2007/08 by reference to the five Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes. Members were invited to ask questions during the presentation and these are detailed below with the response appearing in brackets. The presentation would also identify again by reference to the ECM outcomes the priorities and examples of intended action(s) that would feed into the Children & Young People's Plan 2008-11.

Julia Almond advised the Commission that she had only commenced her role within Telford & Wrekin in January this year and that she had initially taken stock on the present position of the service and to reflect on the tremendous work that had already been commenced in the Borough. In particular she made reference to the Building Schools for the Future/Campus Telford & Wrekin programme and that the Council had received national recognition from Central Government with the confirmation that the Council could manage its own in-house managed ICT provision within schools. She also acknowledged the successful partnership work that had been established in the Borough, particularly within the clusters, and that she wished to develop this work further.

Being Healthy – it was mentioned that all schools had fully engaged in the Healthy Schools programme with 35 schools achieving the full standard. Members were also informed that the teenage pregnancy rate had fallen by 15.7% since 1998. Other reported highlights included that waiting time to access CAMHS had been reduced and the successful programmes to tackle obesity. Members were informed that the forthcoming JAR inspection would particularly concentrate on Children in Care and Disabled Children.

Councillor Francis – sought confirmation of the current teenage pregnancy rate within the Borough as she was under the impression that the rate was increasing. (By way of response the Corporate Director replied that whilst the rate had stabilised it was still considered to be too high. However, she acknowledged that further work was required to be undertaken. Councillor Burrell – reminded the meeting of the early intervention work that the Council had initiated and that through this continued work there was a recognised need to include and provide the appropriate level of

support to families and people where required, this would as a result affect the current rate).

Councillor Tomlinson – enquired about the current policy of including pregnant teenagers within mainstream education and she questioned the perceived message that this provided within schools. She was concerned that this inclusion gave an impression that teenage pregnancy was “fashionable”. (In answer to this point members were informed that the desired intention was to ensure that these teenagers were able to remain and be given access to mainstream education for as long as possible).

Councillor Swift – made a comment that the Council should not forget the young teenager fathers who were also involved in teenage pregnancies and ensure that they were supported as well. (This was acknowledged as being an important matter).

Mr Atkinson – enquired about the identified correlation in respect to Children in Care, the attainment level in Key Stage 4 results and the levels of crime committed by children in care. (The meeting was informed that the published figures were unreliable due to the size of this particular cohort which accordingly led to a wide variance in the recorded percentages).

Staying Safe – the Commission was informed of the key highlights that had been achieved during 2007/08. These included that 75 Heads and a number of school governors had undertaken the training on Safer Recruitment; the year also saw the development of the Domestic Abuse Strategy and increased placement stability with a rate of 70% being achieved.

A number of questions were raised in connection with the Youth Offending Service, whether this would be continued and what the future level of funding was likely to be. (By way of answer the meeting was advised that the same level of funding had been confirmed as this year with no uplift in the level after inflation. Members were also referred to the feedback that had been received following the completion of the YOS Inspection, which had been very positive. A suggestion that had arisen was that the service should concentrate on those who were at greater risk and the Council was looking to examine how to deal with this particular aspect).

Enjoying and Achieving – it was noted that the Commission had previously received a report in connection with Key Stage results. However, the meeting was referred to the OfSTED Inspections of Schools where during the year over 83% of Primary schools were judged to be good or outstanding together with a similar rate for Secondary schools. It was also reported that overall school attendance was improving, that there was effective support for Travelling Children and that over 900 children were receiving musical instrument tuition.

Making a Positive Contribution – members were reminded of the ongoing support that was provided to Young Carers and also for Children in Care, which had seen 91% of these Children in Care participating in their reviews. Reference was also made to the recent Hot Shot and the Active Involvement Service Awards Nights which resulted in some 435 awards being presented. Another welcome aspect that had been evidenced was that some 5,000 children and young people had participated in a number of the Council’s consultations. The meeting was informed

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that work towards Young Carers was ongoing – it was also acknowledged that a number of young carers still remained to be identified.

Achieving Economic Well-being – within this particular outcome the following were identified within the presentation. These included that the percentage of year 11 pupils continuing in education had increased to 77% although the rate of NEETs was also considered to be high at 9.4%. There was also a 100% uptake of the 195 free childcare places for 2 year olds in the disadvantaged groups. It was further reported that there was an increase in the number of hours used by 3 and 4 year olds – thus enabling parents and carers to seek a return to work.

In connection with the intended actions that would feed into the developing Children & Young People's Plan again these were outlined to the Commission as linked to the established outcomes as referred to in the ECM agenda. These included – being healthy – Reduction of child obesity, teenage pregnancies and alcohol consumption; Staying Safe – reduce the impact of Domestic Violence; Enjoying and Achieving – Improve attendance and achievement and continuation of the rolling out of the Telford Culture Zone; Positive Contribution – by seeking to reduce the rate of offending and re-offending behaviour and Economic Wellbeing – to improve access to transport, reduce the level of NEETs and reduce homelessness.

By way of conclusion the Commission was advised of the Service Development Priorities that the portfolio wished to make progress on within the CYP Plan 2008-11. These included the Building Schools for the Future; Integrated Youth Support; Parenting and Family Support; Leisure and Out of School Opportunities for Disabled Children; Multi-Disciplinary working in Clusters; Opportunities for involvement of CYP and parents/carers; Engagement with the non-statutory sector and Workforce Development.

The meeting was informed that the main priority would be on the developing BSF/Campus Telford & Wrekin Programme together with the desire to provide educational provision from 0-19 years. It was also proposed to undertake further development work and support to the existing clusters including furthering the good relationships that had been established with a number of external agencies. It had been identified that further linkages with the third sector should be developed.

Mr Atkinson – commented on the Campus Telford & Wrekin project plans he questioned the effect on those schools that were not included in the first tranche. By way of response the Corporate Director: Children & Young People stated that she wished that all schools could be included at the same time. However, this was not possible as it would be impossible to secure both the funding at the same time and also to manage the Programme within a single comprehensive Borough wide project.

Councillor Swift – enquired about post 16 provision particularly in South Telford and the need to ensure that there was some provision available within the next four years or so. The Cabinet Member: Children & Young People confirmed that he wished this to happen as it had been acknowledged that within South Telford post 16 pupils were “leaking” to attend alternative provision within Shropshire. It was confirmed that as part of the Campus Telford & Wrekin that post 16 provision would be made available at the new Abraham Darby Academy based on the existing and proposed

specialisms. It was also acknowledged that there was an identified need to work towards the provision of post 16 vocational qualifications within the Borough.

Further comments were raised in relation to Youth Support which included the actual level of youth workers employed within the Borough; the effects of part time youth workers having to work with a full time worker and the resultant effect that this had on the overall youth service; the work of the youth buses and the linkages with Connexions. By way of response it was suggested that there was a need to wait for the feedback and results from the Enhanced Youth Inspection. Following the publication of the results of the Inspection the Council would then be in a position to review the current provision and deal with any observations that may arise from the inspection.

SC1-46 INTEGRATED SERVICE FOR DISABLED CHILDREN

The Commission were introduced to Richard Lansdale Business Manager – Disabled Children and Sarah Mulcuck Joint Commissioning Manager for Disabled Children who had prepared the briefing note that had been attached to the agenda.

Members were informed that the Integrated Service for Disabled Children brought together a range of local and Health professionals into a single managed service, and was presently located within three sites within the Borough. It was planned however to open a new purpose built centre in Malinslee in Spring 2009. Members were referred to the briefing note in which details were provided in relation to Multi-Disciplinary Assessment, Resources, Equipment & Adaptations, Child Protection and Children in Care, Medical and Therapy Input to Bridge Special School, Transition and Information.

A number of the specific items contained within the briefing note were individually highlighted – these included:

Short Breaks – these enabled breaks being provided to families which often extended to overnight residential breaks. Services were accessed via a Resources Panel chaired by the Shared Care Co-ordinator. It was confirmed that the Council was a Pathfinder through the DCSF Short Breaks Programme which enabled the Council to benefit from significant increased investment which also included capital funding. As well as providing breaks to families with children with the most complex needs, the service also wanted to ensure that young people could access mainstream provision, with support, wherever possible.

Direct Payments – the service also actively promoted the use of Direct Payments and this was now the preferred option for 25 families. A Service Level Agreement was in place with Adult & Consumer Care for the provision of an Advice Service for Direct Payments.

Equipment and Adaptations – it was reported that at present there was one full time equivalent Occupational Therapist in post located within Adult & Consumer Care service area. With the absorption of children's work in this way waiting times had been virtually eliminated, although the demand for this service was steadily increasing. In relation to moving and handling the service was developing plans to

address the training, assessment and provision of equipment which would enable children to access short breaks safely in the same way as at home or school.

Transition – the Commission was informed that a Personal Assistant was currently seconded to the Integrated Service from Connexions for Youth. The service in conjunction with other members of the Integrated Service contributed to the Transition Plans for the children who had Statements of Special Educational Needs. Responsibility for young people eligible for these services from Adults and Consumer Care Portfolio transferred at age 18, and the service worked closely with the Person Centred Planning and Transition Team. There was a clear commitment to assess need and produce clear plans from age 16 and there were also close links with the 16+ Team for young disabled people who were Care Leavers.

A number of members raised questions in connection with the service the responses to which are detailed within the brackets following the question.

Councillor Tomlinson – enquired as to whether any part of the current service provision utilised the voluntary sector. (By way of response the Commission was informed that this had been identified as one area that could be developed further with linkages to the CVS being currently explored).

Councillor Tomlinson – also enquired about delays that had been communicated to her about the suitable provision of facilities to assist families in supporting disabled children. (She was informed that the service had consistently reviewed individual cases where issues of manual handling and whether planned provision was suitable. There was also the impact of new technologies to be considered and the continuing need to ensure that training was suitable, particularly the impact that this would have on families).

Councillor Sahota – enquired about his perception that the diagnosed increase of cases within the autism spectrum. (Members were advised that there had not been a measurable increase in the actual numbers of diagnosed cases – however it was acknowledged that there had been an improvement in identification methods).

SC1-47 FORWARD PLAN

Members were informed of the forthcoming Cabinet decisions contained within the Forward Plan which covered the period April 2008 – July 2008 for the Children & Young People portfolio.

SC1-48 CHAIRMAN'S UPDATE/REVIEW OF MEETING

The Chairman advised the meeting that she had no updates on which to report. However she did request feedback on the meeting. Members felt that the meeting had again been effective and that this was due to the continuation of the policy of the agenda containing briefing papers and reports for all of the agenda items.

It was pointed out that this had led to Members being better informed in advance and providing the opportunity for Members to identify comments and questions that they wished to raise within the subject areas at the meeting.

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In connection with suggested agenda items a number of members commented on the previous Commission Review report on Youth Service Provision during which they stated that very little had arisen in the current service provision following the recommendations of the review report. It was further suggested that this could be considered and discussed as a single item on a future agenda as it impacted on so many other functions of the Council.

It was further suggested as to whether there should be an agenda item in connection with the results of the Joint Area Review.

SC1-49 DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF THE COMMISSION

The Commission noted that this meeting was the final meeting for the 2007/08 Civic Year. The meeting dates for the forthcoming Civic Year 2008/09 were noted as Monday 2nd June 2008, Monday 8th September 2008, Monday 3rd November 2008, Monday 19th January 2009 and Monday 30th March 2009.

The meeting closed at 8.00 pm

Chairman.....

Date.....

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

SCRUTINY COMMISSION 1 – 14 JULY 2008

OFSTED INSPECTION OF SCHOOLS – OUTCOME OF SCHOOL REPORTS

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To inform the Scrutiny Commission 1 of recent Ofsted School Inspection Reports.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That the Commission notes the contents of the report for information.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Since the last meeting of the Scrutiny Commission, Inspection Reports have been published on 13 local schools:
- i. 10 infant, junior and primary schools
 - ii. 1 secondary school
 - iii. 1 special school
 - iv. 1 cross phase school

4. SUMMARY/OVERVIEW

- 4.1 Ofsted use a four point grading system to indicate their judgement of a school's effectiveness:
- 1 = Outstanding
 - 2 = Good
 - 3 = Satisfactory
 - 4 = Inadequate

4.2 Below is a summary of the grades from these 13 Ofsted inspection reports, together with hyperlinks to the reports on the Ofsted website.

School Name	Date	Overall Effectiveness	Achievements & standards	Quality of provision	Leadership & management	Behaviour	Attendance
Primary Schools							
Crudgington Primary School	16/04/08	3	3	3	3	1	2
High Ercall Primary School	21.05.08	2	2	2	2	1	2
Lawley Primary School	15/01/08	1	1	1	1	1	2
Madeley Infant School	20/02/08	1	1	1	1	1	2
Newdale Primary School	11/12/07	1	1	1	1	2	2
Old Park Primary School	20/05/08	2	2	2	2	2	3
St Lawrence Primary School	20/02/08	2	2	2	2	1	2
St Luke's Catholic Primary School	21/01/08	3	3	3	3	2	3
St Matthew's Primary School	15/01/08	1	1	1	1	1	1
St Peter & St Paul Primary School	15/01/08	2	2	2	2	2	2

School Name	Date	Overall Effectiveness	Achievements & standards	Quality of provision	Leadership & management	Behaviour	Attendance
Secondary Schools							
Adams Grammar	23/01/08	1	1	2	1	1	1
Special Schools							
Southall School	27/02/08	4	4	4	4	4	3
Cross Phase Schools							
Hadley Learning Community (S) Hadley Learning Community (P)	30/01/08	3	3	3	2	3	3

4.3 A summary of the key successes:

- 9 of the 13 (69%) schools inspected are judged as good or outstanding - in terms of overall effectiveness and achievement and standards.
- Leadership and management is judged as good or outstanding in 10 out of 13 (77%) schools inspected.
- Behaviour is judged as either good or outstanding in 11 of the 13 (85%) schools inspected.
- 12 of the 13 (92%) schools have demonstrated the capacity to continue to improve even further in the future.
- Governance in all but one school is at least satisfactory, with many schools rated as good or outstanding.
- One school (St Matthew's Primary School) has achieved outstanding in all the categories depicted above, a further three schools have achieved outstanding in 5 out of the 6 categories and, another, in 4 categories.

5. **CONCLUSION**

Members are asked to note the outcome of these inspections.

6. **ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no environmental implications contained in this report.

7. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications contained in this report.

8. **WARD IMPLICATIONS**

There are no ward implications contained within this report.

9. **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Appendix 1 contains a series of hyperlinks to the full inspection reports located on the official Ofsted website.

Report prepared by Sue Dyson, School Improvement Officer,
Tel: 01952 380886

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

R-EVOLUTION Multi – Use Centre

BRIEFING REPORT TO SCRUTINY COMMISSION 1 – 14TH JULY 2008

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a brief background to the R-Evolution project, and to summarise progress to date.
- 1.2 To summarise outstanding challenges.
- 1.3 To make recommendations for a viable future model with anticipated costs, and proposals for how this is funded.

2. BACKGROUND & PROGRESS TO DATE

- 2.1 On Christmas Eve 2003, Telford & Wrekin PCT was invited to bid for uncommitted, Strategic Health Authority Capital money – bids had to be made that day, and demanded a commitment to spend the money that financial year!
- 2.2 Within hours the PCT put in a bid for £600K to develop a Young People's Centre. The proposal recognised that socially excluded young people, who probably need more support than their peers, are less likely to access traditional health and other Support/leisure services.
- 2.3 The vision was to create a multi agency venue, with a strong 'young person centred ethos'.
- 2.4 The bid was successful, and even after an initially abortive attempt to base the centre in Malinslee, the SHA agreed to allow T&W PCT to carry forward the money into the next financial year because they recognised the need for a unique and innovative 'joined up' approach to supporting vulnerable young people.
- 2.5 Around the same time, the Borough of Telford & Wrekin had accommodation problems for the Key Stage 3 Pupil Referral Unit (the PRU), which was in temporary premises and needed to secure a permanent base.

- 2.6 This situation resulted in a range of meetings taking place between officers of Children's Services and the PCT to develop a joined up young person facility reflecting the ethos - identified in 2.3 above
- 2.7 The two statutory partners were joined by a third and very significant partner – 'nacro Shropshire', and initially received support from the other children's agencies at that time – Connexions, Youth Development Service, Youth Offending Service, Schools, Police etc. Other interested parties have attended various stakeholder events and all had expressed interest in becoming involved.
- 2.8 A cabinet report was approved in July 2005 which set out a vision of how the development of the project would operate. This was to follow a '3 phase process'
- ✓ Phase 1 – establishing the PRU and organising timetabled targeted sessions with eg; CAMHS, Connexions, teenage pregnancy work, drug & substance misuse work, targeted youth work, work with some of our LAC children etc.
 - ✓ Phase 2 – As phase 1 – but operating 9a.m. – 10 p.m. with a drop in facility included, but on a more targeted basis.
 - ✓ Phase 3 – As above – but including weekends and trying to develop sports, clubs and community and environmental project work.
- 2.9 It was recognised from the outset that the centre was developed as an amalgamation of different budgets, into a pooled budget arrangement, in order to get the centre 'up and running'. It was further recognised that through the non statutory status of Nacro, they would be in a much stronger position to generate external funding sources, which would enable future staffing resources to be secured.
- 2.10 It was further recognised that phases 2 and 3 would only go ahead once external/alternative funding sources were found.

3. **PROGRESS TO DATE**

3.1 **Successes**

- ✓ The refurbishment and building contract (undertaken by Nacro) was completed in May 2006, on time and within budget!
- ✓ The PRU moved in for the final summer half-term (June-July 2006)
- ✓ BTW and the PCT agreed and signed a Section 28A pooled budget agreement (capital costs) and a Section 3 pooled budget (revenue costs) which incidentally is the only formally agreed pooled budget agreements for the children's service in T & W
- ✓ Nacro are 'managing the building' on behalf of BTW and PCT, providing a part-time Manager as well as investing £20k in kind themselves into the project.

Overall, Phase 1 has been very successful, with some initial PRU/building operational issues now generally overcome, (NB – this will always be a changeable situation due to the nature of the cohort of children present). The PRU recently appointed an excellent Head of PRU, who has now successfully ensured an equally successful Ofsted inspection.

Secondly, Nacro were successful in attracting European social fund monies, targeting vulnerable teenagers. Targeted drug and substance misuse work is also being delivered via Nacro

Some twilight and evening use is now being developed, with drug and substance misuse teenagers, as well as some targeted support around LAC children.

4. **CHALLENGES**

- 4.1 Nacro have now withdrawn from the direct management of the building to allow for the appointment of a centre manager (to be temporarily based with Connexions 4 Youth) to allow greater capacity to be given to the development of provision within the centre. A twelve month seconded post is currently out to advert and we hope to have someone in post in time for the new term in September.
- 4.2 Due to the nature of the Centre being initially developed under an 'alignment of existing budgets', (due to lack of finances that were available), the centre is now wishing to be in a position to try to proactively develop phase 2, which if successful, would be best placed to support phase 3.
- 4.3 The targeted drop in sessions were (and are), envisaged initially to be supported by operational staff from these specific service areas, eg; LAC nights are currently staffed by existing LAC residential workers for example.
- 4.4 We (as a management board) feel that we have reached a stage of development of the project that we feel ready to embrace the next development phase, but need to have the profile of the facility raised. We have made a conscious effort not to promote it too much, whilst we have been 'bedding in' some of the initial operational issues referred to earlier.
- 4.4 We recognise that the drop in sessions programme is the area of development that now needs most support. One of the 'gaps' that we have is the active willingness of agencies to now see R-Evolution as a key vehicle in supporting the delivery of services to vulnerable teenagers. The schools are well supportive (via the excellent work of the PRU head), but perhaps support from agencies such as police, community services etc, now need a more corporate drive.

- 4.5 It was recognised at the outset that phases 2 and 3 would continue once funding (generally external sources) was identified. However, the ability to provide staff to support multi-gym sessions for example is currently limiting the range of activities that could be offered at the centre for part of the targeted drop-in. It is recognised however, that Leisure Services (in BTW) have focussed income targets and these would come under more pressure if staff had to be removed from a leisure centre to deliver a session at R-Evolution.
- 4.6 The management board have secured some short term funding to appoint a centre manager. The purpose of this post is to have some one in post who can act as a buildings manager and a worker to develop provision with young people; both directly and by involving existing and new partners.
- 4.7 Transport is a significant problem, (as it is across Telford in terms of movement across the Borough in the evenings for teenagers). The location of R-Evolution is both a help and a hindrance, in that it isn't sited in a area where 'there is an 'ownership by that area', thereby creating potential conflicts with other teenagers from other areas of the Borough. However, when it comes to access after 5.00 p.m., then Stafford Park becomes a problem.

5.0 **CONCLUSION/SUGGESTED WAYS FORWARD**

- 5.1. Having enthusiastically and successfully worked up phase 1 of the project, a more proactive approach to move forward on Phase 2 is required.
- 5.2 The Management Board is actively working up a potential operational model to best support the implementation of phase 2 (and eventually 3). This would be a 'core team' to support the general operation of the building, as well as set out a timetable arrangement of targeted drop in times in the evenings.
- 5.3 That identified costs are brought back through an agreed process. To be agreed through the R-Evolution Management Board.
- 5.4 Having operated from the building for a period of time it is clear that having a PRU based in the same building does impact on the development of the centre because of the room requirements and require movement around the building by groups of young people. The management board are to work with the CYP Leadership Team to consider different solutions.



Telford & Wrekin

C O U N C I L

FORWARD PLAN

82nd Edition

Effective from 1st July 2008

Covering the period

July 2008 to October 2008

Specific Items for SCRUTINY COMMISSION 1
(Children & Young People)



**DEMOCRATIC
SERVICES**

BOROUGH OF TELFORD & WREKIN

JULY 2008

Title	Post 16 Provision for Campus Telford	
Exempt		If yes please state Paragraph Number(s) under which item is exempt:
Lead Cabinet Member and Portfolio Area	Cllr Stephen Burrell Children & Young People	
Why this is a Key Decision	Borough-wide implications	
Purpose	Creating Post 16 provision at three schools in the Borough as per the objectives of Campus Telford: Lord Silkin; Wrockwardine Wood; and Burton Borough School.	
Recommendation	To approve recommendations as set out in the report.	
Decision Maker	Cabinet	
Target Cabinet/Date of Decision	14 July 2008	
Proposed Consultation	Key agencies, partners and stakeholders	
Contact	Name Mal Yale Telephone No 01952 380932	Designation Capital and Facilities Manager Email mal.yale@telford.gov.uk

AUGUST 2008

NO DECISIONS FOR AUGUST 2008

SEPTEMBER 2008

NO DECISIONS FOR SEPTEMBER 2008

OCTOBER 2008

NO DECISIONS FOR OCTOBER 2008

TELFORD & WREKIN COUNCIL

**CORPORATE PARENTING SCRUTINY MONITORING GROUP
ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08**

**REPORT OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE CORPORATE PARENTING
SCRUTINY MONITORING GROUP**

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 To provide a summary of the work undertaken by the Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Monitoring Group (CPSMG) during the municipal year 2007/08, including key issues that members wish to highlight to the Cabinet and the issues which members will be pursuing in future meetings.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 That members note the content of this report and endorse its referral on to the Cabinet.**

3. SUMMARY

- 3.1 The Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Monitoring Group (CPSMG) is the main mechanism by which scrutiny members monitor the performance of services to children and young people in the care of the Council. The group meets regularly with officers and with children and young people who are in care.
- 3.2 The CPSMG is a sub-group of the Scrutiny Commission for Children & Young People and this report seeks to inform members of the Commission on the work of the sub-group over the past year and planned work for the year 2008/09.

4. PREVIOUS MINUTES

- 4.1 Notes from Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Monitoring Group meetings 2007/08.

5. BACKGROUND

- 5.1 There are currently around 230 children in care in Telford & Wrekin. The population of children in care fluctuates but in general, the population is increasing year on year. Some of this increase is due to improved early identification of children who need to be placed in care, through the Integrated Children's Service. Also, young people locally, regionally and nationally are remaining in care for longer.
- 5.2 In June 2007, the Department for Education and Skills released the Care Matters: Time for Change White Paper. The measures included in the White Paper aim to reduce the significant and widening gap between the outcomes for children in care, and their peers. A wide range of issues are covered, including education, life outside school, children on the edge of care, the transition into adulthood and others.
- 5.3 The Council – including officers and all elected members – is the corporate parent for children and young people in care up to the age of 21, or 24 if they continue in full time education until that age. The Council's Corporate Parenting Strategy states:
“In pursuit and delivery of these duties we are encouraged as Councillors and officers to ‘THINK CHILD’, to constantly ask ourselves ‘...would this be good enough for my child?’ ”
- 5.4 A sub-group of the Scrutiny Commission for Children & Young People, the Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Monitoring Group (CPSMG) is the main mechanism by which scrutiny members monitor the performance of services to children in care in Telford & Wrekin. This report will inform other members on the work of this group and some of the key issues for children in care, as all members are collectively responsible as corporate parents.
- 5.5 The group meetings 6 times a year with officers and quarterly with children and young people in care. After some poor attendance during the 2006/07 municipal year, CPSMG meetings in 2007/08 have been well attended and members participate positively. As well as 5 elected members, the group includes 2 representatives from the Children & Young People's Strategic Partnership whose experience and contributions are invaluable. The group is supported by officers from the Safeguarding and Corporate Parenting service area, who provide detailed presentations, information and advice to ensure the group fulfils its role effectively.

6. ANNUAL REPORT 2007/08

6.1 Work programme 2007/08

- 6.1.1 The issues covered in meetings with officers during 2007/08 include:
- Regulation 33 visits

- 16+ Team Action Plan
- Education issues for children in care
- Substance Misuse
- Family Placement Panel
- Follow up to scrutiny review of foster care services
- Laming Audit
- Follow up to scrutiny review of care leavers services
- Annual performance report.

6.1.2 The key role of the sub-group is to monitor the performance of services to looked after children. This role is in part fulfilled by a meeting dedicated to an Annual Performance Report which covers all of the performance indicators that relate to children in care.

6.1.3 The annual performance report in September 2007 showed that, overall, performance was good, particularly in:

- Dental and health check ups
- Case reviews held within prescribed timetables (100%)
- Placement stability
- Percentage of care leavers with at least one GCSE grade A*-G or GNVQ
- Children and young people communicating their views as part of their statutory review.

6.1.4 Poor performance was noted in children missing 25 days or more of school in the previous school year. This may be due to illness, delay in arranging appropriate education after a placement move, refusal to attend school, among other reasons. This is being closely monitored by officers, to identify children and young people who risk falling into this category early and putting measures in place to support them.

6.1.5 The remaining CPSMG meetings are issue based, and include discussion of any performance indicators relevant to the issue. This enables members to look at the wider context and the issues that affect the performance indicators. Where there is an indicator which is of particular concern, this will be monitored at subsequent meetings until members are satisfied that performance has reached an acceptable level. Some key indicators are monitored at each meeting, such as the population of children in care, and the type of placement they are in.

6.2 Meetings with young people

6.2.1 The group meets quarterly with young people. The first meeting of the year involved a number of young people delivering Total Respect training to members. Total Respect training is used across the country and aims to ensure that children and young people's right to participate in decisions affecting them is fully respected in the care system as a whole. The young people delivering the session spoke about what it is

like to be in care, and why it is important that their views are heard and taken into account.

- 6.2.2 The other issues that have been discussed in meetings with young people during 2007/08 are:
- Independent Reviews
 - Contact – with friends, family, and social workers
 - Communication – with social workers, feedback from the scrutiny meetings, and communicating important information to children in care
 - Supporting children in care to go on to university
 - Being in foster care
 - What Social Workers are like, and what they should be like
 - The experience of school as a child in care.
- 6.2.3 The meetings with young people are scheduled for shortly before the meetings with officers. As far as possible, agenda items are mirrored so that members can ask questions in the meeting with officers based on the information and views that they have received from the young people. However, the issues discussed at the meetings with young people are to a large extent dictated by the young people who attend, as they will talk most openly about things that are current issues for them.
- 6.2.4 Previously, the meetings with young people were fairly formal and feedback from the young people who had attended was that although they liked being listened to, they didn't like the style of the meeting. Different styles of meetings have since been tried, including large group discussions, and small groups. Meetings usually start with some refreshments which give a chance for members and young people to talk informally and start to build up a rapport. Officers in the CYP portfolio try to encourage a range of young people to attend so that different issues and different viewpoints are discussed.
- 6.2.5 The issues raised in the meetings with young people are followed up at a subsequent meeting with officers. A feedback sheet is sent out to all children in care so that they can see what has been talked about and what action will be taken to make improvements, even if they did not attend the meeting. This feedback is a crucial part of the scrutiny process, as it demonstrates that things are changing as a result of young people engaging with the group. Extracts from the most recent *News and Views* newsletter are included at Appendix 1.
- 6.2.6 One outcome of a meeting with young people is improvement to the Independent Review process. An Independent Review is an annual, individual review for each child involving relevant professionals, the young person and the carer to look at the support being provided to that young person, the current issues they are facing and additional help that they might need. The young people raised concerns about the consultation papers, the number and role of people involved in the

meetings, and the length of the meetings. An action plan has been created in response to this which includes reviewing the paperwork and meeting format (which will be done in consultation with young people), giving children in care more information about the process, and repeating training for social workers. The action plan will be monitored by the CPSMG.

6.3 Key issues

6.3.1 Generally, recommendations arising from the meetings are at an operational level and are actioned by officers following the meetings. Feedback is provided regularly to members on actions that have been taken. Below are a number of key issues that the group feel should be highlighted at member level for consideration.

6.3.2 Raising the positive profile of children in care

Children and young people are brought into the care of the Council for many different reasons. It is usually because their parents are unable to look after them because of illness or disability, because of abuse or neglect, or because there is no parent to look after them. Very few young people are placed in care because of their own bad behaviour, however, there is a perception among some people that this is the case. The Council as the corporate parent for these children should endeavour to ensure that they are portrayed positively and seek opportunities to do so, for example through stories in the Council magazine and website.

6.3.3 Embedding the role of Corporate Parent within the Council

It is important that all elected members recognise their responsibilities as corporate parents and CPSMG members were disappointed with the low member attendance at the Total Respect training in July 2007 and some Corporate Parenting training that has been run as part of the Members Information Seminars. To be effective corporate parents, members need to be aware of the issues faced by children and young people in care. More recent member training held in April has been well attended.

There are a number of ways that elected members can carry out their role as corporate parents. Most elected members are also school governors, and school governors have a role in monitoring the achievement of the children in care that attend their school. Members can also be involved in Regulation 33 visits that are made to the Council's two children's home on a regular basis. The pool of members trained to undertake these visits (accompanied by an officer) is small which has prevented a member going on every visit. It is suggested that the Cabinet and Group Leaders should encourage their members to attend Corporate Parenting training, and to be trained to undertake Regulation 33 visits.

6.3.4 Cost of services for children in care

The average weekly expenditure per child is reducing despite an increased population of children in care. However, this figure remains high than both the national average and the Statistical Neighbour Group average. During the meetings, it has been clear that services are taking an early intervention approach to try to reduce negative impacts on children and therefore reduce their need for specialist services at a later date. This approach will also help to reduce costs, but is not a quick method of reducing costs.

6.3.5 Education of children in care

The majority of children in care have experienced such disruption in their lives that their education suffers. Nationally and locally, children in care have a lower educational attainment than their peers, and around 25% of children in care in Telford & Wrekin have a statement of Special Educational Needs compared to 4% of the general population of school aged children. To help narrow the gap between children in care and their peers, all school aged children who have been in care for more than 20 days should have a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The PEP details their strengths, targets for the future, the areas where they need more support, and the specific support that they will be given. Over the last year, the CPSMG has monitored this performance indicator as when it was first discussed, there was only evidence of 45% of PEPs being in place. Officers have pushed to ensure that this figure increased, and the percentage of PEPs in place now stands at 66%. This will continue to be monitored as members would like to see this figure increase further.

A small number of young people in care go on to study at university which is an achievement that we should celebrate. However, meetings with young people have shown that there are others who want to go to university but have real concerns about whether they will have financial support to do so. The Council should support these young people as far as is possible to achieve their full potential, and should consider whether further practical support and finance can be made available for the small number of young people who want to study at university.

6.4 Work programme 2008/09

6.4.1 A number of items have been identified for the CPSMG work programme 2008/09. These will be added to as other issues are identified. Items noted for follow up are:

- Independent Review Action Plan
- Placement Strategy, including feedback from the Fostering Panel member representative
- Laming Audit
- Regulation 33 Action Plan.

6.4.2 Other items to consider are:

- Rights & Representations Annual Report
- Performance report
- Complaints
- Corporate Parenting Team Annual Report
- Joint Adoption Service Annual Report
- Education Champion role
- Follow up to scrutiny reviews of Care Leavers Services and Foster Care Services
- Care Matters implementation
- Linking CPSMG meetings with young people to the Care Council that will be set up under Care Matters
- Services to children in care with BME backgrounds
- Services for children placed out of the borough.

7. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

AREA	COMMENTS
Equal Opportunities	The CPSMG has a role in ensuring that Council services are providing equal opportunities to children in care as to other children and young people.
Environmental Impact	None.
Legal Implications	Legislative changes under the <i>Care Matters: Time for Change</i> White Paper are awaited and will impact on some Council services to children in care.
Links with Corporate Priorities	Giving Children & Young People the Best Possible Start in their Lives
Financial Implications	There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.
Opportunities and Risks	
Ward Implications	Relates to all wards.



April 2008
Issue 2

News & Views

Rights and Representations Project for Children and Young People in Care

Inside this issue:

- Feedback from Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Group meetings
- Hot Shots Award Ceremony
- Hot Shots Music Project
- Pledge Consultation winner
- Corporate Parenting's promise to young people

Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Group

Three Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Group meetings have been held since the last issue of News & Views. They were attended by a total of 8 children in care and care leavers. Different topics were discussed at each meeting which were support for care leavers, education and health.

Support for Care Leavers

Young people raised these issues:

- Contact with a social worker every three months is not enough.
- Young people are being moved on from residential care at 16 whether they were ready or not. These young people do not have the option of returning home to families if living by themselves didn't work out.
- Not having their birth certificates made opening a bank account and getting a national insurance number difficult.

Group members replied:

- Although contact every 3 months is the legal minimum requirement, the 16+ Team tries to give more support when they can. Maintaining contact will be part of the role of 2 Personal Advisors who have recently been appointed.
- Young people can stay in residential care after 16 in certain cases, and those who have to leave should meet with their social worker to discuss the best option for them.
- Social Care is putting a system in place to make sure that a copy of their birth certificate is available to every care leaver. They also take responsibility for Care Leavers having a national insurance number and will help them with setting up bank accounts.



Telford & Wrekin
COUNCIL



2005-2008
Integrated Children's Services
2006-2007
Early Intervention
(Children at Risk)
Culture and Sport for
Hard to Reach Groups

Produced by the Children and Young People's Active Involvement Service



More Issues Raised at Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Groups

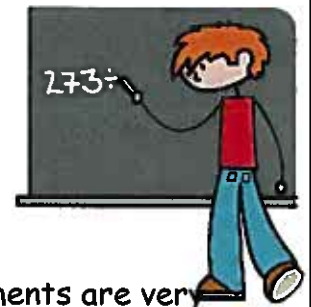
Schools to be given advice about writing references

Education

- Not all young people knew they could go to the designated teacher for children in care at their school for help and support, or they didn't know who the teacher was.
- A poor reference from school could stop children in care from getting jobs.
- Not all young people could remember being involved in their Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings.

Group members promised:

- To remind designated teachers to make themselves known to children in care at their schools.
- To send schools advice about writing references.
- All young people should be involved in writing their own PEP.



Health

- Young people were concerned that health appointments can be missed when they move because of post going to old addresses.
- Young people don't have access to Help 2 Quit unless they are in school or college.
- Young people don't have enough money to choose healthy eating options.
- There needs to be sensitivity around arrangements for health assessments.
- There are not as many leisure & fun activities for care leavers as for younger children.

- appointments are very important and social workers and carers should ensure they are kept.
- Fern Zihni, the Nurse for Children in Care can advise on all health related issues, including Help 2 Quit. Contact her on 01952 385838.
- An information pack on healthy eating would soon be available to all care leavers from Health Promotions.
- Jenny Cockcroft, Fun & Leisure Co-ordinator and Sophie Beard, Leaving Care Youth Support Worker, would plan activities for older children in care and care leavers shortly. Contact Jenny on 01952 385838.



Jenny Cockcroft to plan activities for older children

Group members:

- Agreed that health

Pledge Consultation

Corporate Parents were recently asked to produce a set of promises to children and young people in care.

Children and young people in care over 8 years old were asked to think about 6 promises they thought the Council should make to help them be happy and safe.

All suggestions were entered into a prize draw and the winner

was an 8 year old girl whose name was pulled out of a hat to receive £20 worth of WH Smith's vouchers.

Well done, and thank you to all of you who returned your promises.

Corporate Parenting's promise to young people can be seen on page 6.



Turn Up, Tell Us! By Councillor Gill Green

"If any aspect of your care has been bothering you, why not TURN UP, TELL US" - this is the message from Gill, Chair of Corporate Parenting Scrutiny Monitoring.

Gill is joined by Mike, Tracey, Karen, Louise, Neil and Beryl on this group which meets regularly to check the Council's services to the young people in our care.

She says "Councillors do have good intentions but when the one thing that used to be missing from our meetings turned out to be the young people themselves we decided it was time for a change.

First of all, we felt that the style of the meetings, all sat round a big table at the

Council offices could put some people off, particularly the younger ones or those who hadn't ever been to a formal meeting before. And so our latest meeting was at Highfield House, with chip supper supplied, and a much more friendly atmosphere, which we hope made it easier to speak out.

Some good topics have been raised so far but if it matters to you, it matters to us so we are looking forward to meeting more of you in the future. The next meeting will be on Tuesday, 6th May at Highfield House in Wellington. If you want to come along but are a bit nervous about being by yourself you can bring

someone along to support you - some people have brought their social worker or residential care worker, and Mike Bould, the Rights and Representations worker, is usually at the meetings too."

If there are any issues you would like us to talk about at the meeting on 6th May email or text Mike Bould at michael.bould@telford.gov.uk or on 07976 100588 or leave a message with Amanda on 01952 385112.



Councillor Gill Green who says "Turn up, tell us!"