



Minutes of the meeting of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 11 JULY 2018, 7.00 PM in the COUNCIL CHAMBER

Present: Councillor Sam Crooks (Chair),
Councillors Shammi Akter, Marie Bradburn, Anthony Brown,
Andrew Buckley, Jane Carr, Bill Green, David Hopkins,
Victoria Hopkins and Elaine Wales
Mrs A Marlow and Mrs I Oduko (Parent Governor Representatives)

Officers: Michael Bracey (Corporate Director - People), Mac Heath (Service Director - Children and Families), Roz Mascarenhas (Youth Participation Worker), and Dwight McKenzie (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Apologies: Councillor Norman Miles

Also Present: Councillor Zoe Nolan (Cabinet Member - Children and Families), Jane Held (Independent Chair - Milton Keynes Safeguarding Board), Toby Poyner (Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet), and Clarissa Tear (Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet), S Rhaman (Member Designate [SACRE])

and 5 members of the public

CYP03 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

None.

Councillor Crooks advised the Committee that Dwight McKenzie (Overview and Scrutiny Officer) would be leaving the Council in the near future. Thankful appreciation was expressed for his support and contribution to the Committee.

CYP04 LOCAL CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING BOARD ANNUAL REPORT (INCORPORATING SCRUTINY OF THE MILTON KEYNES MULTI-AGENCY SAFEGUARDING HUB) 2017/18

Witness: Jane Held (Independent Chair - Milton Keynes Safeguarding Board)

The Committee received a presentation from the Independent Chair of the Milton Keynes Safeguarding Board who advised that:

- (a) The Board's 2017/18 Work Programme had been agreed in 2016, and efforts were being made to update the Work

Programme, making it more reflective of the current operating environment;

- (b) Among Board achievements for the period were:
 - (i) development of a “Suicide Prevention” policy;
 - (ii) good progress on work to tackle female genital mutilation; and
 - (iii) considerable work in safeguarding vulnerable people, for example, from modern day slavery exploitation of young people;
- (c) The performance of all partner agencies had been looked at by the Board, and a root and branch review of Groups undertaken;
- (d) The Board had moved its focus to strategic concerns rather than on operational concerns;
- (e) Significant work with partner agencies was ongoing around safeguarding;
- (f) The Children's Safeguarding Board, relative to the Adult Safeguarding Board. had found it harder to adjust to the combining of the separate Safeguarding Boards into a single entity; i.e. the Milton Keynes Safeguarding Board (MKSB), primarily because the Children's Safeguarding Board had been established for longer.

Following the presentations, in its discussion the Committee noted that:

- (a) There was now better awareness of the criminal exploitation of children, and also of the increased mental challenges faced by young people;
- (b) There was a need for recognition on the part of all organisations involved in safeguarding children that there were no quick fixes to the safeguarding challenges faced by young people;
- (c) Government legislation, such as the Children and Social Work Act regarding the safeguarding of children, was a driver for the new structure of the Milton Keynes Safeguarding Board;
- (d) The MKSB was supported by two Programme Delivery Boards, which were themselves supported by three Working Groups;
- (e) A Performance, Quality and Improvement Group reviewed the operational performance of the Board and its constituent parts;
- (f) Programme Boards were developing new protocols to support working and quality of practice.

RESOLVED -

That the Committee's appreciation be expressed to Jane Held (Independent Chair - MK Safeguarding Board) for the Annual Report presentation.

CYP05

JOINT PLAN FOR CHILDREN'S AND ADULT SAFEGUARDING BOARD FOR 2018/2019

Witness: Jane Held (Independent Chair - Milton Keynes Safeguarding Board)

Discussion of this agenda item was merged with discussion of agenda item on the Local Children's Safeguarding Board Annual Report.

RESOLVED -

That the Committee's appreciation be expressed to Jane Held (Independent Chair - MK Safeguarding Board]) for the Joint Plan presentation.

CYP06

REGIONAL ADOPTION AGENCY

Witness: Mac Heath (Service Director - Children & Families) and Michael Bracey (Corporate Director - People)

The Committee received a brief presentation from the Service Director (Children and Families) and the Corporate Director – People, who outlined the following points:

- (a) The Council was considering a proposal to become a member of a new Regional Adoption Agency (RAA);
- (b) Milton Keynes was currently a member of the Central East RAA, which comprised membership from a number of regional local authorities;
- (c) The operation of the Central East RAA had, however, been impacted by the departure of a number of local authorities, such as Northamptonshire, for various reasons;
- (d) Milton Keynes was currently working with a consulting firm to develop a business case for a new RAA involving a smaller number of local authorities at the regional level; i.e. Bedford Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and Milton Keynes Council;
- (e) The RAA model emerging was one where employees from the participating local authorities, such as Milton Keynes, would be seconded to the RAA;
- (f) The Corporate Parenting Panel would continue to provide guidance to the Council even with the creation of a new RAA;
- (g) Feedback from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee as to the direction of travel the Council should take in pursuing the establishment of a new RAA.

In the discussion following the presentation, the Committee noted that:

- (a) Milton Keynes had data providing insight as to the likely demand for the new RAA service;

- (b) Recruitment of staff would be from across the three participating boroughs (Bedford, Central Bedfordshire and Milton Keynes), and all RAA staff would continue to be employed by the participating councils;
- (c) “Adopt Thames Valley” was one of the first RAAs, and as a result had been carefully studied by Milton Keynes Council for lesson learning;
- (d) In guiding its actions, the Council always considered it important to know what type of family was best suited for each child.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Committee supports the Council’s broad direction of travel towards a Regional Adoption Agency.
2. That the Committee had no significant concerns with Milton Keynes Council being in a small Regional Adoption Agency.

CYP07

OFSTED REVIEW BRIEFING (TOPICAL ITEM)

Witness: Michael Bracey (Corporate Director- People)

Michael Bracey provided the Committee with an update on the Council’s “Annual Conversation” as part of the Office for Standards in Education, Children’s Services and Skills (Ofsted) new inspection arrangements. In his presentation to the Committee he reported that:

- (a) Ofsted’s new inspection arrangement for local authorities now comprised an “annual conversation” which was a new methodological approach to inspection by the regulatory body;
- (b) As “annual conversations” were new, no template existed as to the format of this conversation;
- (c) Milton Keynes Council at this time had ongoing targeted work around corporate parenting; and
- (d) An inspection of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) arrangements was expected during autumn 2018, following Ofsted concerns regarding MASH in the last inspection.

The Committee thanked Michael Bracey for his presentation, and commended the briefing for the valuable insight it had provided as to the amount of work being done by Children’s Services in Milton Keynes.

RESOLVED -

That the Committee notes the document as providing helpful information as to the breadth and vast amount of work being done by Children’s Services on behalf of Milton Keynes Council.

WALNUTS CHILDREN'S HOME (TOPICAL ITEM)

Witnesses: Cllr. Zoe Nolan (Cabinet Member- Children and Families, Milton Keynes Council), Mac Heath (Service Director- Children & Families), and parents of children at Walnuts Children's Home.

The Committee received a brief presentation on the current position from Councillor Nolan who advised that:

- (a) An informal consultation was currently taking place regarding the future of the Walnuts Children's Home which shared a site with an all-age community special school. However, the Council was not, at this time, proposing to close the Home;
- (b) The informal consultation was as a result of the Governors having asked the Council that the residential provision at the school be reviewed;
- (c) The Council was currently utilising a headteacher from the Grove Special School in Milton Keynes to manage the operation of the Walnuts Children Home;
- (d) The Council however had struggled with finding someone suitable to manage the operations of both the children's home and the school;
- (e) Once the informal consultation was concluded, the Council would consider, as a next step, the holding of a formal consultation in respect of Walnuts' residential provision;
- (f) The Council's ultimate aim was to ensure the best outcome for the children at the Walnuts Children's Home, which Councillor Nolan had visited recently.

The Committee also received a presentation from a number of parents of children at the Walnuts Children's Home who advised that, in their opinion:

- (a) The Walnuts Children's Home consultation should have been an opportunity for Milton Keynes Council to demonstrate a joined up vision for health and social care working together for the best outcomes of the students at the home;
- (b) The Council's conduct of consultations should be governed by statutory guidance and public law principles;
- (c) Consultation best practice was that consultations affecting schools / residential facilities for children should be held in term time;
- (d) The Council had, however, failed in respect of the above requirements and guidance in a number of regards, including:

- (i) Not carrying out an impact assessment as to the effect the proposed change would have on the children resident at the Walnuts Children's Home and their families;
- (ii) Failing to recognise that there was no alternative accommodation in Milton Keynes for the children at the Walnuts Children's Home;
- (iii) Not adhering to the Children and Families Act in the conduct of the consultation, as the act made clear a council's obligations in this regard;
- (iv) Failing to show how the consultation fitted with the Council's own "higher needs review";
- (v) Failing to differentiate between the school and the residential provision on the shared site;
- (vi) Failing to make clear why the headteacher of Walnuts School was no longer the designated officer;
- (vii) Failing to take account of the scope for more student provision;
- (viii) Making no attempt to show how Ofsted issues could be addressed;
- (ix) Lacking awareness that any future residential solution for children at the Walnuts Children's Home involving them being sent out of and then brought back into the borough would be disruptive for the children;
- (x) Not recognising that children should be housed near their families so that their family members could visit them on a regular basis. Potential outcomes of the consultation could jeopardise these family bonding opportunities for children at the home.

During the Committee's discussion following the presentations, the Committee noted that:

- (a) The consultation was specifically aimed at getting better outcomes for children and families, and was in keeping with the Council's obligation to periodically review its service provision;
- (b) Leadership was essential to a school being graded as outstanding, and so management staff availability for the Walnuts Children's Home had to be of concern for the Council;
- (c) The residential facility at the Walnuts site was operated at a significant cost, with the school currently supporting the residential home provision financially. The Council had to consider whether the current provision at Walnuts Children's Home was the best way to spend money in preparing children for adulthood;
- (d) If the informal consultation progressed to a formal consultation, a range of officers, including potentially a Regulation 44 officer, would be consulted regarding the consultation outcome and any resultant decisions;

- (e) The expressed desire of the Council was that children residing at the Walnuts Children's Home continued to reside in Milton Keynes in the event of any future changes to residential provision at the facility;
- (f) Ideally, the Council aimed for children in care in the borough to have a family setting.

In its further discussion, the Committee also noted that:

- (a) It was appropriate for the Scrutiny Committee and the Scrutiny Management Committee to review the consultation's outcomes and processes so as to make recommendations to the Cabinet Member for Children and Families;
- (b) Decisions as to the future of the Walnuts Children's Home could appropriately be brought back to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee;
- (c) The issue of Milton Keynes children in care being housed out of the borough was something that needed to be addressed by the Council;
- (d) The timing of the consultation (out of term time) and duration of the consultation (8 weeks) might not be appropriate due to the subject matter of the consultation;
- (e) Children having to be housed at Walnuts Children's Home was not indicative that parents had not, in the past, provided them with a good home or appropriate support;
- (f) There were different models of care, and the consultation should be used to see what was possible, such as foster care, or 1 to 1 provision. However, the option of children at Walnuts Children's Home residing with their families and for these families to be provided specialist care assistance at home by the Council was not viable owing to the particular care needs of these children.

RESOLVED -

1. That Milton Keynes Council's Children and Families Service be mindful of and takes into account the Committee's views as outlined below:-
 - (a) The best outcome for and what is in the best interest of the children at Walnuts Children Home must be paramount in any change at the home;
 - (b) The Council must demonstrate and provide reassurance that changing models/perceptions of care that might inform changes at Walnuts Children's Home are applicable to, and appropriate for, Milton Keynes;
 - (c) The Council must ensure continued stability, even in the event of change, for the children at Walnuts Children's Home;

- (d) Any closure of the Walnuts Children's Home should not result in the affected children having to be housed/relocated outside Milton Keynes. This will ensure that the children retain full local contact with their family and with the borough;
 - (e) Children at Walnuts Children's Home should be included in the Walnuts Children's Home consultation;
 - (f) There is a need for the Council to review provision of the type of services specifically provided at the Walnuts Children's Home and on a borough level generally;
 - (g) The Council needs to establish and make clear its vision as to the type of care that it wants to provide in and for the borough;
 - (h) The Council should take into account the needs of the families of the children at the Walnuts Children's Home when considering any changes at the home; and
 - (i) The Committee recommends that a further consultation should form part of a review of the provision of specialist special educational needs (SEN) residential home provision in Milton Keynes;
2. The Committee also expressed the following concerns as regards the Council's conduct of the current consultation: -
- (a) The consultation process itself, which should be reviewed and improved, including the time period in which the current consultation is being conducted;
 - (b) The consultation makes no reference to alternative accommodation, and the fact that there is no equivalent alternate accommodation in Milton Keynes. Any future consultation must address this shortcoming; and
 - (c) Foster care or a family environment might not be a suitable option for the children at the Walnuts Children's Home, if the home is closed;
3. The Committee, in the near future, would like to visit the Walnuts Children's Home to see the service provisions. This visit will aid the Committee in any further future decisions regarding the home and it is hoped that this will be facilitated by the Children and Families Service at the earliest opportunity.

CYP09

COMMITTEE CO-OPTION - STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL ON RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Councillor Crooks (Chair) introduced the item to the Committee and outlined that for the 2018/2019 Council year the Planning Group was of the view that great value would be added to the Committee's work by having a representative from the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) as a non-voting co-optee. The Committee was also advised that SACRE had recommended Shammi Rahman as a potential co-optee.

The Chair outlined to the Committee the professional profile and achievements of Ms Rahman. A welcome was also extended to Ms Rahman by Councillor Crooks for attending the Committee's meeting.

RESOLVED -

1. That a representative from the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) in Milton Keynes be co-opted onto the Committee as a non-voting member for the 2018/2019 Council year.
2. That Shammi Rahman be accepted as SACRE's nomination to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee for the 2018/2019 Council year.
3. That Scrutiny Management Committee approval of a SACRE representative on the Committee for the 2018/2019 Council year be obtained.

CYP10

MINUTES

The Committee considered the Minutes of its meetings of 7 March 2018 and 16 May 2018.

RESOLVED

1. That the Chair sign as a correct record the Minutes of the Committee's meetings held on 16 May 2018.
2. That the Chair sign as a correct record, the Minutes of the Committee's meeting of 7 March 2018 subject to it being corrected and noted that Amanda Marlow (Parent Governor Representative) had sent her apology.

CYP11

WORK PROGRAMME 2018/19

The Committee reviewed its proposed Work Programme for 2018/2019.

RESOLVED -

That the Work Programme be endorsed by the Committee.

CYP12

MILTON KEYNES EDUCATION AWARDS

The Committee noted as a matter for report the Milton Keynes Education Awards which were successfully held on 7 March 2018 at the Doubletree Hotel.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Committee extends its congratulations to the Children and Families Service for a successful Milton Keynes Education Awards.
2. That the Committee acknowledges the hard work put into organising the Milton Keynes Education Awards by Mac Heath (Service Director - Children and Families), Michael Bracey

(Corporate Director - People), Cheryl Eyre (Head - Setting & School Effectiveness) and Councillor Nolan (Cabinet Member - Children & Families).

CYP13 MINUTES OF THE CABINET MEETING - 5 JUNE 2018

The Committee noted the Cabinet meeting of 5 June 2018 and associated matters for report. The Committee also noted Councillor Crooks' presentation to Cabinet of the Committee's recommendation (7 March 2018 Children and Young People Committee meeting) that a "longitudinal study to measure outcome of the various young parent support and intervention programme" be undertaken by the Council.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Committee notes the Minutes of the Cabinet.
2. That the Committee notes Councillor Nolan's desire to incorporate concerns for very young people into the prevention element of the Council Plan.
3. That the Committee notes the sense of the Cabinet meeting that the Delivery Plan associated with the Council Plan in future reflects wider understanding of health to include physical health.

CYP14 SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

The Committee noted as a matter for report, the Scrutiny Management Committee's (SMC) meeting of 12 June 2018 and specifically the Scrutiny Management Committee's decision that Scrutiny Committees be invited to review current Corporate Performance Indicators.

RESOLVED -

That the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's Planning Group receive the Corporate Performance Indicators and in future bring the issue back to Committee for approval.

CYP15 CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

The Committee noted as a matter for report the Corporate Parenting Panel meeting of 26 June 2018.

RESOLVED -

That the information be noted.

CYP16 HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The Committee noted as a matter for report the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting of 27 June 2018.

RESOLVED -

That the information be noted.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9:02 PM

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