

Minutes of the meeting of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 30 OCTOBER 2018 at 7.00 PM

Present: Councillor Sam Crooks (Chair),
Councillors Akter, M Bradburn, Brown, Buckley, D Hopkins, and
Wales
Mrs A Marlow (Parent Governor Representative)
Ms S Rahman (SACRE Representative)

Officers: M Heath (Acting Director of Children's Services), C Eyre (Head of Setting and School Effectiveness), G Sandmann (Head of Youth and Community), C Marriott (Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability), R Mascarenhas (Youth Participation Worker), and E Richardson (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

Apologies: Councillors Baines, Carr, Darlington, Green, V Hopkins, Miles and Mrs I Oduko (Parent Governor Representative)

The Committee, whilst acknowledging the difficulty with the timing of the meeting (half-term week), expressed its disappointment at the low number of attendees at this meeting which had covered some important issues.

Also Present: J Green (Director, Milton Keynes Safety Centre) and T Poyner (Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet)

CYP17 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Brown declared an interest in agenda Item 5 as an employee of the Denbigh Alliance Multi-Academy Trust.

CYP18 ROAD SAFETY AND HAZARD AWARENESS TRAINING PROVISION IN MILTON KEYNES

Witness: Jo Green (Director, Milton Keynes Safety Centre)

The Chair thanked Ms Green for hosting the two site visits by members of the Committee to the Milton Keynes Safety Centre. Everyone who attended had thoroughly enjoyed the experience and now had a much greater understanding of the value of the Centre's work.

Ms Green then gave a presentation which explained the work of the Safety Centre, commonly known as Hazard Alley, the number of children who visit each year, staffing, its educational ethos, the hazards covered by the tour, how these were delivered, the target audience, how much the centre costs to run, sources of income,

what the future challenges were and possible ways in which the Committee and other councillors could help.

During the discussion which followed the presentation, the Committee also noted that:

- (a) In recent years there had been a reduction in the number of visitors which had reduced the Centre's income;
- (b) The deficit had been covered by reserves in the past, but these were now running low. Work had been done to reduce the deficit during the Centre's 2017/18 financial year and the Director hoped that it would be further reduced in the future;
- (c) Redway safety was included in the tour, both as part of the physical environment at the Centre and as part of the interactive walking route planner board;
- (d) Safeguarding was now a significant issue for schools as a whole and young people individually. The Director agreed that the Centre's programme in relation to safeguarding needed to be reviewed and updated;
- (e) It was understood that the cost of transport appeared to be one of the reasons as to why fewer local schools now visited the centre. Many schools had cut all trips of any description, even those where a parental financial contribution was required;
- (f) It was also thought that the volume and complexity of the paperwork teachers needed to complete in order to get a trip organised could be a deterrent;
- (g) The Centre had a very limited staff resource and it was not possible to carry out the level of marketing to schools required to make sure that they attended on a regular basis.

The Committee then made a number of suggestions which it hoped would help the Centre improve its offer and continue to be a valued resource where local children can experience risks and hazards in a safe environment. These included:

- (a) Encouraging younger people to become volunteers at the Centre. Candidates for the Duke of Edinburgh Award were expected to undertake community activities and volunteering at the Safety Centre might fit into this;
- (b) The possibility that younger volunteers could help with social media activities and sorting out IT problems;
- (c) Exploring grant funding to cover the cost of visits for deprived children. However, it would be difficult for the Centre to identify such children and it might be better to encourage schools to apply for this type of funding. Some parish councils provided funding for this type of activity, although applications would have to come from schools rather than the Centre;

- (d) Expanding the offer into secondary schools with sessions on drugs and alcohol, raising the awareness of the problems of “County Lines” drug dealing, cyber safety etc;
- (e) Going into schools to give safety training in-house for a reduced fee although this then negated the positive experience of learning from the real-life scenarios available at the Safety Centre;
- (f) Exploring the possibility of virtual reality headsets to provide an immersive experience;
- (g) Ms Rahman, the SACRE representative, offered to help the Safety Centre develop its input into the Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) curriculum. The Committee was advised that this was now known as the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural curriculum (SMSC).

RESOLVED –

1. That Jo Green, Director of the Milton Keynes Safety Centre, be thanked for her attendance at the meeting, her presentation and her contribution to the Committee’s discussion of Road Safety and Hazard Awareness training in Milton Keynes.
2. That the Committee’s Planning Group prepares a response to the issues raised in the presentation, with particular reference to the “Key Challenges for the Safety Centre” and “Ways You Can Help”. Once completed, the response will be sent to the Safety Centre, all members of the Committee, and the Cabinet or Council as appropriate.

CYP19

PROVISIONAL SCHOOL PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES 2017-18

Witnesses: C Eyre (Head of Setting and School Effectiveness), and G Sandmann (Head of Youth and Community)

The Committee received a presentation from the Council’s Head of Setting and School Effectiveness and the Head of Youth and Community, giving details of the performance of schools in Milton Keynes for the academic year 2017-18. The presentation put the outcomes into the context of the school population in Milton Keynes and covered results for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stages 1 and 2, GCSE (Key Stage 4) and A Levels. The results, which were provisional and would be confirmed in January 2019, were presented as a comparison with both the national and regional averages.

The presentation also included details of attainment by SEN provision, results for the Council’s Virtual School which provided support to Looked After Children (LAC) and Ofsted outcomes.

During the ensuing discussion the Committee noted that:

- (a) The SEN data was presented differently this year. The Council was targeting primary support for SEN pupils which was being followed up with every school and at both Key Stage 1 and 2, the

attainment in Milton Keynes was higher than the national average;

- (b) The Virtual School was currently supporting about 25 pupils and each child had its own, individual plan;
- (c) Younger children were doing better but there was a need to improve outcomes for LACs at Key Stage 4 (GCSE) as some of them were not always ready for formal exams at 16;
- (d) There were very few young people in Milton Keynes who were not in education, employment or training (NEETS);
- (e) The Head of Setting and School Effectiveness was visiting every academy in Milton Keynes to discuss their results as the Council needed to have an overview of attainment across all schools and to challenge poor performance where necessary;
- (f) There was a major national crisis in teacher recruitment. The ability to attract good teachers to the area was not unique to Milton Keynes. St Paul's School was in the process of establishing a local employment agency for teachers, available to all schools in Milton Keynes, which aimed to cut both the bureaucracy and the costs of recruiting teachers through an agency;
- (g) St Paul's School had also taken the lead to refurbish and manage what was currently unused teacher accommodation at Greenleys School to provide suitable accommodation for new teachers moving into Milton Keynes;
- (h) There was a high turn-over of teachers leaving the profession after only a few years as they found it too stressful as an occupation and could earn more money in alternative careers;
- (i) One of the reasons why local results appeared to tail off at secondary school was that many of the high achievers at Key Stage 2 were creamed off to the grammar schools in Buckinghamshire. There were also a number of very good private schools in the area which were popular with aspirational families;
- (j) Maths results at GCSE were down nationally. With the changes to the GCSEs this year, a much higher level of literacy had been required to understand the questions across all subjects;
- (k) There was still a cultural issue around a lack of aspiration amongst some pupils from white working class backgrounds;
- (l) In the past the number of pupils receiving free school meals (FSM) had been used as a deprivation indicator. However, since the advent of the free school meal offer for all infants it was much harder to identify pupils who might need extra support at an early stage. The form to claim free school meals was also complex and might be a deterrent to families claiming the FSM entitlement in subsequent years;

(m) There was a lack of specialist teachers in Milton Keynes and secondary schools were targeting GCSE/Key Stage 4 attainment at the expense of other years.

RESOLVED -

That Cheryl Eyre (Head of Setting and School Effectiveness) and Gavin Sandmann (Head of Youth and Community) be thanked for their attendance at the meeting, their presentation and their contribution to the Committee's discussion of the Provisional School Performance Outcomes 2017-18.

CYP20

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES SERVICE

Witness: M Heath (Acting Director of Children's Services) and C Marriott (Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability)

The Committee received a presentation setting out the Council's progress and future priorities for the Special Education Needs (SEN) and Disability Service, which highlighted the challenges faced by the service, its successes, its impact, priorities and vision for the future.

The Committee heard that the service had recently been subject to a joint Ofsted and Care Quality Commission inspection during October. This had involved 16 focus groups with 124 participants, including parents, young people, schools, health professionals and social care colleagues, as well as 20 setting visits. The inspection letter, which would highlight the service's strengths and recommend areas for development, would be published within 70 days of the inspection.

The Council had similar numbers of children with an SEN statement or Educational Healthcare (EHC) Plan to the national average. The performance of Milton Keynes Council was above both the national and regional averages when it came to processing EHCPs within the 20 week framework.

EHC plans were for children and young people aged up to 25 who needed more support than that available through general SEN support. The scope of an EHC Plan was much broader than an SEN statement as it identified not only educational needs, but also health and social needs, setting out the additional support required to meet those needs. They could be seen as a form of contract between the young person, family and the Council to enable young people to achieve their full potential in early years, at school, college, home and in the community.

The Committee also learnt that the service's priorities were to embed co-production, including aspirational outcomes, prioritise preparation for adulthood earlier and develop effective support for children with the most complex needs. Future developments looked to an integrated and inclusive approach covering placement sufficiency, the short breaks offer, specialist provision, positive behaviour support, evidencing impact through outcome measures and the integration of services.

RESOLVED -

That Mac Heath (Acting Director of Children's Services) and Caroline Marriott (Head of Special Educational Needs and Disability) be thanked for their attendance at the meeting, their presentation and their contribution to the Committee's discussion of the Council's progress and priorities in delivering its SEND service.

CYP21 UPDATE ON WALNUTS CHILDREN'S HOME (TOPICAL ITEM)

Witness: M Heath (Acting Director of Children's Services)

The Acting Director of Children's Services advised the Committee that the Council, following a recent inspection, had received an Ofsted Compliance Notice on 18 September in relation to the buildings, safeguarding, oversight and the quality of some procedures at the Walnuts Children's Home. The Council had submitted its response on 26 October and was expecting comment back from Ofsted imminently. A further inspection was likely during December 2018.

RESOLVED -

That the Acting Director of Children's Services be thanked for his update on the current position of the Walnuts Children's Home.

CYP22 MINUTES

The Committee considered the Minutes of its meeting of 11 July 2018 and noted that Councillor Baines had been omitted from the list of attendees.

RESOLVED

That once amended to include Councillor Baines as an attendee, the Chair signs, as a correct record, the Minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 11 July 2018.

CYP23 CABINET – 4 SEPTEMBER 2018

At its meeting on 4 September, the Cabinet received and considered two recommendations from the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on the following items:

- i. 7 March 2018: Careers Advice for Young People; and
- ii. 11 July 2018: Informal Consultation - A Proposal for the Closure of the Walnuts Children's Home.

The Committee was disappointed to note that these referrals, which had involved detailed scrutiny and a considerable amount of work by the Committee, had not been considered in any great detail by the Cabinet, with the referrals just being noted.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Committee is disappointed with the dismissive response of the Cabinet at its meeting on 4 September 2018 to the items referred to it by the Committee (C81 – Careers Advice for Young

People and closure of the Walnuts Children's Home) as both referrals included a number of crucial points which the Committee had expected to be addressed by the Cabinet.

2. That the Chair, on behalf of the Committee, writes to the Cabinet expressing the Committee's concern that the said items were noted without addressing any of the specific points raised by the Committee.

CYP24 SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 5 SEPTEMBER 2018

The Committee received and noted the decisions of the Scrutiny Management Committee of 5 September which had a bearing on the Children and Young People Committee and its Work Programme.

RESOLVED -

That the information be noted.

CYP25 SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE – 10 OCTOBER 2018

The Committee received and noted the decisions of the Scrutiny Management Committee of 10 October which had a bearing on the Children and Young People Committee and its Work Programme.

The Committee discussed the Scrutiny Management Committee's request that the Planning Group brought a proposal on how the Committee planned to include scrutiny of the School Admissions process in its Work Programme to the next meeting of the Scrutiny Management Committee. Several options were discussed, including deferring the item to the 2019/20 Work Programme.

The Committee's preferred option was to hold a single subject workshop where officer colleagues could explain the process which would then be discussed in a less formal setting than a full Committee. Although there appeared to be a particular problem on the Eastern Flank, as this was a subject which would be of interest to other ward councillors, it was agreed that all councillors should be invited to attend the workshop so that they could raise any issues experienced in their wards with the Schools Admissions process.

At the meeting on 10 October, the Scrutiny Management Committee agreed to trial a "Call for Evidence" process and requested that the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee endorsed the proposed wording of the Call. The Chair explained how Calls for Evidence operated in Parliamentary Select Committees and that when done successfully it produced a wide range of views for the committees to consider.

The suggested wording for the trial was "the contribution of education and skills to the planned growth of Milton Keynes". The Committee was of the view that this would tie in with several other strands of development in Milton Keynes, such as MK:U proposals and approved the wording. Due to an already very full council timetable of meetings, the earliest that an extra meeting of the Committee could be fitted in to consider any evidence from the Call

and allow time to invite potential witnesses, was the 2 April 2019. Unfortunately this was just a month before the local elections and councillors would often be out canvassing in early April. However, those members of the Committee who were at the meeting, agreed that both trialling the Call for Evidence process and the subject matter were significant issues and that it was important for all members of the Committee to attend.

RESOLVED -

1. That in response to the Scrutiny Management Committee's request for the Planning Group to bring forward a proposal as to how the Committee considers School Admissions, a workshop, open to all ward councillors, be organised to carry out this scrutiny.
2. That the Committee endorses the Scrutiny Management Committee's suggested wording for the Call for Evidence in relation to education and skills and that the proposed date for a meeting to consider any evidence received be confirmed as 2 April 2019.
3. That although the 2 April was well into the 2019 "election period" all members of the Committee had an obligation to attend this particular meeting.

CYP26

HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The Committee noted, as a matter for report, the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting of 5 September 2018.

RESOLVED -

That the information be noted.

CYP27

CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

The Committee noted that the next meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel would take place on 13 November 2018.

RESOLVED -

That the information be noted.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9:15 PM