

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP SCOPING DOCUMENT

Review Topic	
Primary School Sector Alternative Education Provision for Pupils excluded from School across Milton Keynes	
Origins of Review Group	Review Group Membership
<p>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Approval to proceed confirmed by the Scrutiny Management Committee on 5 September 2018</p>	<p>Membership across the political groups on a 2:2:2 basis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr M Bradburn (LD) • Cllr J Carr (LD) • Cllr D Hopkins (C) • Cllr Miles (L) • Cllr Morla (C) • Cllr Wales (L)
Overview & Scrutiny Officer	Initial Scoping of Review
E Richardson	24 September 2018
1. Purpose	
To carry out an in-depth review of the provision of alternative education in the primary school sector across Milton Keynes for children excluded from mainstream education	
2. Rationale	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What does the Review hope to achieve An understanding of the extent and availability of the provision of alternative education for excluded pupils in the primary school sector across Milton Keynes - Why is the Review taking place? There is concern that insufficient attention is being given to the issue locally and that, with the continued growth of Milton Keynes, there is the possibility that the options/alternatives for pupils excluded from school on a long term basis are inadequate - What is the community importance and benefit? A proper analysis of the individual needs of primary school children who have been excluded from mainstream education, for whatever reason, is crucial to enable them to benefit from any alternative education provision and helping them to return to a mainstream school. - How does it fit in with the Council's corporate priorities / scrutiny priorities? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children - putting young people first by always prioritising protecting our vulnerable children from harm and neglect and providing support so every child has the opportunity to succeed (<i>Council Plan Priority 5</i>); • Education and Skills – supporting improvement in our education and skills sector, ensuring a good local school place for every child and a non-selective model of education (<i>Council Plan Priority 9</i>); 	

2. Rationale (cont)

- What are the opportunities to make a distinctive impact?
Improve the outcomes for excluded primary school children so that they are equipped to return to mainstream education
- How will the review influence what the Council does?
By recommending any improvements that should be made to the current level of provision

3. Proposed Outcomes

- What are the proposed outcomes of the review?
An assessment of whether the existing policy delivers sufficient provision for alternative education for pupils excluded from the primary school sector in Milton Keynes and whether any improvements / changes in the existing provision need to be implemented

4. Background

- Is the review looking at existing provision or new provision?
Existing:
Alternative education for primary school pupils who have been excluded from a mainstream school is currently provided by the Milton Keynes Primary Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), based at the Romans Field School site on Shenley Road, Bletchley.
It is a small short-stay strengths based school with provision for up to 21 pupils (including 3 out of area commissioned places) who have either been, or are at risk of being excluded from mainstream primary schools. The average length of stay is 12 weeks.
- How does it relate to existing provision?
Is the existing provision adequate or does it need updating / changing / improving?
- Has the need for the review come about from an issue arising from national or local events?
No
- How does the issue relate to the Scrutiny Work Programme?
The Terms of Reference for the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee include the following:
 - (a) *scrutinising the provision of services, the achievement of targets and the provision of resources by the Council and its partners for the children and young people of Milton Keynes and their families;*
 - (b) *supporting and challenging the Council and its partners in developing evidence-based policies and strategies which assist in creating positive outcomes for the children and young people of Milton Keynes so that they can be healthy, safe, enjoy their childhood, achieve economic well-being and make a positive contribution to the Borough;*
- Are there any relevant community views to refer to? e.g. any previous consultation?
There may be evidence/research available from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Education Funding Agency (EFA)
- What is the gap between provision and need?
This will be identified as part of the Review

5. Timetable

- How frequently will the Task and Finish Group need to meet?
Suggested 4 meetings
Meeting 1: Review of current provision, an understanding of how the exclusion process works, the numbers involved; discussion of paper based evidence / reports etc
Meeting 2: Witness evidence from service providers, PRU staff, (Children Missing Education Team ??) etc
Meeting 3: Witness evidence from service users – head teachers, school governors, (parents of affected children??)
Meeting 4: Review and Report; TFG to consider any recommendations it may want to make
See Annex A for suggested time line
- What are the key deadlines?
None, other than the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee's request to report to the January 2019 meeting. Any recommendations for improvements are unlikely to be implemented before the start of the new school year in September 2019
- Who needs to see the analysis?
Cabinet Member – Children and Families
Service Director - Children's Services
Primary Head Teachers Forum?
Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee
Scrutiny Management Committee
- Who needs to contribute to the report?
See paragraph 8 below
- When will the Task and Finish Group report back to the Committee / Cabinet / Council?
Task and Finish Group to report to the Children and Young People Committee meeting on 9 January 2019
- Proposed End date?
Report needs to be completed by 27 December 2018 latest for inclusion in the agenda for the meeting of the Children and Young People Committee on 9 January 2019

6. Methodology / Approach

What method of enquiry will be most suitable for the review?

- Desk-based review of papers;
- Comparisons with other authorities;
- Interview officers;
- Calling witnesses to give evidence

7. Evidence Sources

What types of evidence will be needed?

- Government guidance / legislation
- MKC Guidance for Schools on Exclusions
- Service plans?
- Performance Indicators?
- Evidence from other reviews?
- Independent research articles and papers?

Are there any stakeholders or interest groups the Task and Finish Group wants to hear from in addition to inviting them to the meeting?

- Questionnaire / call for evidence to Primary Schools – DH to attend the Schools Forum and ask for their input (17 January 2019)

Ensure there is a balance in the evidence collected e.g. views of activist groups weighed in consideration of an independent audit report.

8. Witnesses

Who would the Group wish to invite to its meetings?

- Service users:
 - Primary School Head Teachers
- Stakeholders / Interest Groups:
 - School Governors
- Cabinet Member:
 - Councillor Zoe Nolan
- Frontline staff:
 - Primary School Teaching Staff
- External partners
 - Other local authorities – “statistical neighbours”
- Professional experts
 - Milton Keynes Primary Pupil Referral Unit & Chair of Governors
 - Relevant MKC staff from the Children and Families Service Group
 - Headteacher of the MK Virtual School

9. Site Visits / Observations

Is there scope for potential site visits / observations?

NO

10. Public Meetings

Should the meetings be held in public / private / mixture of both?

Wherever possible, it is Council policy that scrutiny meetings should be held in public.

However, there may be a need to exclude the press and public if the TFG is considering specific case details where the individuals involved could be identified

11. Officer Support

Identify Scrutiny Officer and any other officers that will be influential in the review process.

OSO – TBC

- Mac Heath – Service Director (Children and Families)
- Marie Denny – Head of Delivery Setting and School Sufficiency and Access?

12. Resource Requirements

Estimate the amount of 'person' time required and the potential costs involved.
Scrutiny Officer overtime for evening meetings if applicable

13. Risk Assessment

Identify potential obstacles to an effective review, including:

Limited councillor / officer availability due to already busy workloads -
Lack of co-operation / availability from external witnesses

14. Proposed Terms of Reference

1. To scrutinise the adequacy of the alternative education provision for pupils in the primary school sector who have been excluded from main stream education in Milton Keynes and to make recommendations accordingly.
2. To understand the issues relating to the alternative education provision for pupils in the primary school sector.
3. To report on the Task and Finish Group's findings and recommendations at the meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 9 January 2019.

15. Background Papers

1. Milton Keynes Exclusion Guidance Notes
2. Milton Keynes – Exclusions Portal 'How To' Guide for Schools
3. DfE Statutory Guidance on Exclusion from School
4. List of FAQs on the Exclusion of Pupils from School
5. <https://milton-keynes-pru.eschools.co.uk/website/home/173526>

TASK AND FINISH PROTOCOL / OPERATING GUIDELINES

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Task and Finish Groups are set up to undertake an in-depth investigation or review of an issue and operate on a relatively informal basis. Most detailed investigative scrutiny work takes place in this type of working environment. Review Groups are a forum for information gathering and discussion between the Group and officers rather than a formal, decision making body and have no delegated powers.
- 1.2 This document sets out Milton Keynes Council's Operating Protocol for Task and Finish Groups.

2. Membership

- 2.1 The Scrutiny Management Committee will appoint a Chair to each Task and Finish Group, normally on a politically proportional basis, in consultation with Group Leaders taking account of the skills and experience required.
- 2.2 The Membership of each Task and Finish Group is politically balanced and numbers usually vary between a minimum of 3 to 6 elected Members.
- 2.3 All non-Executive Members of the Council are eligible to participate in Task and Finish Groups.
- 2.4 Nominations to the task and finish review groups for confirmation by the Management Committee, will be made by the Chair of the Task and Finish Review Group. The Chair will consult individual Political Group Leaders before nominating any councillors from the Group Leader's Group. Where appropriate, the membership of Task and Finish Groups can co-opt non-Members with a particular expertise / experience / interest to participate in the review being undertaken, eg, the Older Persons' Champion.
- 2.5 The Management Committee will appoint one of its members to act as a sponsor / mentor to each of the task and finish groups.

3. The Review Process

An initial planning meeting will be held involving the Overview and Scrutiny Officer facilitating the review, the elected councillors nominated to sit on the Task and Finish Group, and where appropriate, other Council officers and representatives of Partners or other outside organisations who may be expected to make a significant contribution to the work of the Task and Finish Group, in order to scope the review and agree a plan for the task.

The scoping document / plan should set out:

- (a) A clear statement of the scrutiny topic;
- (b) Proposed outcomes of the review;
- (c) The aim (or purpose) of the review;
- (d) The scope of the review – what will be included and excluded;
- (e) Agreed Terms of Reference;
- (f) Any specific outcomes to be achieved;

- (g) Specific concerns or issues, which should be addressed;
- (h) How the review will contribute to achieving Corporate Priorities;
- (i) An initial list of key stakeholders, partners or other agencies to be involved;
- (j) An initial list of witnesses;
- (k) How evidence will be gathered;
- (l) Any risks which may delay progress;
- (m) A timescale for completion of the task;
- (n) A suggested mechanism for following up / monitoring progress of recommendations which may be made in the final report.

3.3 As well as receiving evidence from witnesses and scrutinising printed matter, consideration should be given to use of site visits, workshops and other activities in order to gain first hand knowledge of the topic under review.

4. Witnesses

4.1 A Council's Overview and Scrutiny function has the power under Section 21(13) of the Local Government Act 2000 to require the attendance of members of the Executive and Council officers at Scrutiny meetings.

4.2 There is a statutory duty (Section 21(14) of the same Act for any member of the Executive or Council officer invited to attend a Scrutiny meeting to comply with the request.

4.3 Other witnesses from external organisations may also be invited to give evidence to Review Groups.

4.4 The Task and Finish Group should identify:

- (a) the persons to be invited;
- (b) the issue in respect of which the person's attendance is requested;
- (c) the reason why the attendance of the person would assist the Task and Finish Group in its task.

4.5 The Overview and Scrutiny Officer facilitating the review will endeavour to give both internal and external witnesses as much notice as is practicable of the Task and Finish Group's request to attend a meeting.

4.6 The invitation will give details of the review being undertaken, including any supporting documents which may be relevant, state why the witness has been invited to attend and whether or not the Review Group requires written reports in support of the witness's evidence.

5. Conduct of Meetings

5.1 Meetings of the Task and Finish Group shall be scheduled to enable the Group to complete its task within the timeframe identified in the scoping exercise. However, it is recognised that on occasion additional time may be needed to complete a task, but the agreement of the Scrutiny Management Committee should be sought for this.

- 5.2 Task and Finish Groups should aim, where possible, to hold the necessary meetings within as short a timeframe as possible so that findings do not become out of date before completion of the task.
- 5.3 Unless the evidence given to a Task and Finish Group is likely to be confidential or exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972, all Task and Finish Group meetings will be treated as public meetings and arrangements made to accommodate any members of the public who might attend.
- 5.4 No witness giving evidence to a Task and Finish Group will be under any obligation to disclose publicly personal information about an employee, a looked after child, or any supplier or recipient of council services.
- 5.5 All Review Group meetings will be Chaired in a manner which ensures mutual respect between all those participating.
- 5.6 The Chair will ensure that questions put by members of the Task and Finish Group relate solely to the issue in respect of which the person's attendance has been requested.
- 5.7 Questioning should be aimed at trying to understand and explore issues rather than at catching witnesses out.
- 5.8 Members of the Task and Finish Group should avoid making statements rather than asking questions.
- 5.9 Witnesses, including Executive Members, are not members of the Review Group and should confine themselves to answering questions put to them by the Task and Finish Group or supplying evidence requested by the Task and Finish Group.
- 5.10 Members of the Task and Finish Group should operate within the agreed plan for the task and should not disclose or use any information/knowledge obtained through involvement in the group for any other purpose.
- 5.11 The Overview and Scrutiny Officer facilitating the Task and Finish Group will take notes to record the evidence given at meetings and at site visits which will be used to form the basis of the final report.

6. Reports, Conclusions and Recommendations

- 6.1 Final reports need to be written in clear English which can be easily understood by the lay reader. Over use of jargon and acronyms should be avoided and, if necessary, a glossary should be included as part of the report.
- 6.2 Final reports should be based on facts collected, give a full picture of the issues scrutinised and contain both conclusions and clear recommendations.
- 6.3 Reports should be an expression of the views of the Task and Finish Group on the basis of the evidence received and it is therefore important that members of the Task and Finish Group express their views at the drafting stage.
- 6.4 When reaching conclusions and making recommendations, the members of the Task and Finish Group should endeavour to reach agreement by consensus. However, if agreement cannot be reached, a minority view on

a particular issue may be included in the final report, or as part of minority report.

- 6.5 Depending on the topic scrutinised by the Task and Finish Group and the recommendations made, the final report will be presented to the Management Committee, Cabinet, Council, a Scrutiny Committee or even an outside organisation for consideration and action.

**Primary School Sector Alternative Education Provision for Pupils TFG
Work Programme**

Date of Meeting	Item	Notes	Objective / Proposed Outcomes	Witnesses / Evidence	Time Allocation
21/11/18	Terms of Reference / scope of the review / plan for future meetings	Review of current provision, develop an understanding of how the exclusion process works, the numbers involved; discussion of paper based evidence / reports etc	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree scope of TFG and Terms of Reference; • Assessment of current provision; • Work Programme for the rest of the review; 	Relevant MKC staff from the Children and Families Service Group	1.5 – 2 hours meeting
13/12/18	Evidence from Witnesses	To hear from professionals delivering alternative educational provision for children excluded from mainstream schools	To understand what is involved in delivering alternative educational provision and the problems involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milton Keynes Primary PRU Headteacher and Chair of Governors; • Acting Head of Children's Services; • Cabinet Member for Children & Families 	1.5 – 2 hours meeting
TBA	Evidence from Witnesses	To hear from service users, ie primary school head teachers / governors Receive any written evidence from statistical neighbours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An assessment of the satisfaction with the current provision; • Is it working? • Is there anything else which could be done? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary School Head Teachers • School Governors 	1.5 – 2 hours meeting
TBA	Recommendations / Report / Action Plan	TFG to consider its findings, make recommendations / draw up action plan / finalise report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TFG to agree any recommendations; • Propose action plan if required; • Report to be completed by 21/12/18 latest; 	None	1 – 1.50 hour at meeting + possible e-mailing to finalise report

