



Minutes of the meeting of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 15 FEBRUARY at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Bradburn (Chair)
Councillors Hawthorn, Lloyd, I McCall, McLean, Miles, Small and Zealley, Mr S Pritchard

Officers: G Tolley (Director of Children's Services), M Bracey (Assistant Director [Partnerships, Commissioning and Performance]), M May (Head of Service for Children in Need), J Moffoot (Assistant Director [Democratic Services]), E Richardson (Overview and Scrutiny Officer),

Also Present: Councillor Dransfield and Elaine Coleridge Smith, Chair of the Milton Keynes Safeguarding Children Board

Apologies: Dr S Chakrabarti

CYP13 MINUTES

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the Committee meetings held on 15 November 2011 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

CYP14 UPDATE ON PREVIOUS ITEMS

The Committee noted that:

- (a) the request for a Review Group to consider Primary School Place Planning had been approved by the Overview & Scrutiny Management Committee at its meeting on 11 January 2012.
- (b) the future management of five day nurseries had been considered by Cabinet on 18 October 2011 and 20 December 2011 and would be given further consideration by Cabinet on 28 February 2012.
- (c) a letter had been sent to the Department for Education setting out the Council's agreed local principles for the future planning secondary school places.

CYP15 REPORT ON THE INSPECTION OF MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL ADOPTION SERVICE

The Director of Children Services reported that the Council's Adoption Service had been inspected by Ofsted on 23 January 2012. The service had been inspected against a series of minimum standards although the framework was different from that used for schools. She anticipated that the full report would be published

before the end of February and would ensure that the report was circulated to all Members once it was available.

CYP16

CABINET MEMBER REPORT 2011/12

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Dransfield reported that during 2011/12 there had been a strong focus on school improvement. Ofsted had raised its rating criteria and a rating of 'satisfactory' was no longer acceptable.

A realistic budget had been set for 2012/13 ensuring that the 'looked after children' budget reflects actual need. There was a saving of c£10m on school capital projects with the aim of providing functional school buildings where the emphasis was on good teaching.

He had adopted a robust, challenging approach, using all opportunities to question strategy and decision making in order to give a clear steer to the department.

The transfer of day nurseries to high quality alternative providers still had to be completed.

The Council would continue to put resources into supporting schools in order to increase the number of schools achieving a good or outstanding Ofsted rating.

Reductions in Council spending on Children's Services continued to be a challenge. There was work to be done on the Council's relationship with academies and how the Council can influence improvements.

Cllr Dransfield also commented that the forthcoming Localism Bill could provide opportunities to explore new ways of working.

In answer to questions, the Committee noted that:

- The Council now had very little control over schools' internal budgets. Most of the budget for Children and Young People was to cover the social services aspects of the Department's work.
- Care needed to be taken over the appointment of school governors and getting the right people in post who can take a school forward. Need to look at what works in good or outstanding schools and see if it can be used elsewhere. Where necessary the Cabinet Member would challenge Headteachers who aren't doing so well.
- The Cabinet Member had an open mind about the opportunities presented by the Localism Bill and would consider any sensible suggestions.
- The Department of Education's direction on local authorities' relationship with academies and their powers to intervene if there are problems was not clear, although if Milton Keynes Council identified problems early it was able to facilitate

improvement. If the Council understands what is happening, it can make recommendations for improvement. The Cabinet Member would like to see the Headteachers of academies on a regular basis in order to ask challenging questions about the school's progress. It was important to maintain a dialogue in order to consult and discuss with them what needs to be done.

- Currently 7/12 secondary schools and 7/89 primary schools were now academies and (4 academies and 3 sponsored academies).
- The Cabinet Member believed that functionality of schools was more important than aesthetics and that the focus had to be on the quality of the teaching, although the buildings had to be well maintained and looked after in order to provide a suitable teaching environment.
- The expected bids from community organisations to run the day nurseries had not materialised, although there were bids from private sector operators. The final decision would be made at Cabinet on 28 February.
- There was a bulge in the primary sector but the Cabinet Member felt that it was not appropriate to allow 'satisfactory' or 'good' schools to expand.

RESOLVED –

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People was thanked for his report and updating the Committee on the work of his Portfolio.

CYP 17

REPORT OF THE MILTON KEYNES SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD 2010/11

Elaine Coleridge Smith, independent Chair of the Milton Keynes Safeguarding Children Board, introduced the report and gave a short presentation which covered governance and accountability arrangements, early help and child protection in Milton Keynes, arrangements for Serious Case Reviews, the Child Death Overview Panel, training and development for Board Members, quality assurance measures, policy and procedures, communication, safer workforce practices and e-safety matters.

In answer to questions, the Committee noted that:

- The Safeguarding Board had been doing a lot of work on e-safety issues. Modern social networking sites gave young people a 'sense of group' and controlling access was difficult. Agencies needed to work round the education of young people to highlight that there is a downside to social media and that they needed to stay alert to the dangers.

The Board was also involving young people in its e-safety work; they had helped to organise and run a conference on e-safety issues. The Board was there to offer support, help and

education locally. Although they can offer guidance to schools, the school don't have to implement it.

- The Safeguarding Children Board was a multi-partner body; if work is being done by its partners, then the work of the Board is out in the community. Where possible they are also trying to involve young people in their work where relevant, although it wasn't always appropriate for young people to attend Board meetings. Clear communication was also important particularly in engaging geographical and ethnic minority communities.
- The Chair felt that the Safeguarding Board was adequately resourced for 2012/13. The 2010/11 accounts showed an under-spend due to gaps in the recruitment schedule. The Board had been able to keep contributions from partner organisations for 2012/13 at 2011/12 levels.
- The Chair and the Director of Children's Services met monthly; there was an overlap between the work of the Board and the Families and Children Partnership, so both are aware of what the other is doing.
- The Board had asked partner agencies to check and collect evidence that all relevant staff had the necessary CRB checks in place.
- Inter-agency communications could sometimes be difficult as the different systems do not 'talk' to each other. However, the Board had developed protocols on information sharing on a 'need to know' basis. It also had a policy of bringing people together face to face as they are then more likely to speak to each other if they have met previously.
- At present the Board did not have a system of volunteer support or specialist assistance from local companies but they were starting to think about the possibilities this approach might offer.

RESOLVED –

1. That the Chair of the Milton Keynes Safeguarding Children Board be thanked for her report and presentation.
2. That the 2011/12 report be considered at the November 2012 meeting of the Children and Young People's Select Committee.
3. That the Board be recommended to include a glossary of terms in the 2011/12 report and that in order to facilitate monochrome printing they consider using letters ie R, A, G rather than colour blocks in the RAG column of the Outcomes table which forms part of the report.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.10 PM