



Minutes of the meeting of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SELECT COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 27 JANUARY 2015 at 7.00 PM

**Present:** Councillor Crooks (Chair)  
Councillors Ferrans, Gowans, V Hopkins, McLean (substituting for Dransfield), Nolan, Pallett, Small and Wilson, Mrs R Collins (Parent Governor Representative and Mrs A Marlow (Parent Governor Representative [Special Educational Needs])

**Officers:** M Bracey (Corporate Director People), M Denny (Head of Delivery [Setting and School Sufficiency and Access]), G Sandmann (Head of Productivity [Setting and School Effectiveness]) and E Richardson (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)

**Apologies:** Councillor Dransfield

**Also Present:** Councillors Miles and Bald and 6 members of the public

**CYP21 MINUTES**

RESOLVED -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 12 November 2014, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to the attendance of Councillor Pallett being recorded.

**CYP22 INCREASING THE NUMBERS OF SCHOOL PLACES TO SERVE OXLEY PARK AND NORTH KINGSMEAD BY THE CREATION OF NEW PROVISION AT SHENLEY WOOD – GOVERNANCE OPTIONS**

**Witness:**

M Denny (Head of Delivery [Setting and School Sufficiency and Access]),

The Council's preferred policy for increasing school provision in the developing areas of the city was to allow successful schools like Oxley Park Academy to expand on their existing sites. However, the Academy's current site was very constrained and therefore this was not an option thus there was a need to consider alternative arrangements.

The Committee scrutinised the above report setting out plans to open new primary school provision in Shenley Wood which would serve the expanding areas of Oxley Park and Kingsmead. The report also presented three possible governance options on how this plan could be taken forward, which were considered by the Committee.

During discussion of the various options, the Committee noted that:

If the new primary provision was an extension of the existing Oxley Park Academy, then the school's Admissions Procedures would need to make it clear to parents how to opt for the campus of their choice;

As an academy, Oxley Park Primary School was responsible for setting its own entrance requirements and if Option A was agreed, would also be responsible for the entrance requirements at the Shenley Wood site. However, the Council would need to work on this with the school, because, although it would not be funding the places, it would need a guarantee that its requirement for adequate primary school provision in this area of Milton Keynes was being met;

There could be transport issues if parents had children at both campuses. The Council needed to make sure that proper parking arrangements were in place at both sites. Options to mitigate the effects of local parking issues included the school running a transfer mini-bus between sites;

The new school building at Shenley Wood was currently under construction and should be ready for September 2016. What needed to be agreed was the issue of governance for the new provision;

Once complete, the school would remain in the possession of the Council for a year before being legally transferred to the academy with a formal funding agreement between Oxley Park Academy and the Council;

The current modelling was for each school to be a stand-alone primary school, rather than splitting years between the two sites. However circumstances change over time and splitting age groups between the two sites might be considered in the future;

Because of the uniqueness of this situation it had not been possible to include a co-operative academy as a possible governance option;

Presenting point 5.1 of the report as a formal recommendation would have been helpful;

As a temporary measure, if Option A was agreed, Oxley Park Academy might be able to take in additional pupils in September 2015, until the new provision is ready. However this was a decision for the school's governing body;

Shenley Church End Parish Council had expressed their support for Option A, as had the governing body and staff at the Oxley Park Academy;

Councillor Bald, as Ward Councillor for Tattenhoe, was pleased to see that progress was being made to resolve the issue of primary

school provision in the Oxley Park area, and she also supported Option A;

Councillor Miles, as Cabinet Member for Children and School Improvement, felt that expanding Oxley Park Academy onto a second site was the most expedient and effective way forward.

The Chair thanked Councillor Bald and representatives from Oxley Park Academy and the Shenley Church End Parish Council for their attendance

**RESOLVED -**

1. That the Cabinet Member for Children and School Improvement be requested to progress the implementation of Option A as the Committee's preferred option.
2. That whichever option is implemented, the Cabinet Member for Children and School Improvement be requested to take into account local concerns about increased traffic and issues with parking at the school sites and ensure that measures put in place to minimise any problems.

**CYP23**

**ACTION PLAN ARISING FROM THE GCSE PERFORMANCE REPORT 2013/14**

**Witness:**

G Sandmann (Head of Productivity [Setting and School Effectiveness])

The witness explained that although the report had been commissioned in-house by the Council, every secondary school in Milton Keynes had co-operated in its production. There had been a cocktail of issues around the changes to GCSEs which had taken place during the 2013/14 academic year, and schools in Milton Keynes had just not been ready for them.

Several changes involved what could and could not be counted towards a school's final performance table rating. Subjects which no longer counted included speaking and listening in English and all vocational courses, even though, in many cases, these were beneficial to individual students. Also, with academic subjects, the grade achieved at a first attempt was the one that counted, although students could still resit to improve their grades on a personal basis.

The Committee considered the report in detail and noted that:

- The Council had established subject network meetings for all core subjects which were scheduled to meet every half-term to share good practice across all secondary schools;
- The number of mock exams being taken by pupils was being increased;

- Information was being gathered from Headteachers on a regular basis, rather than waiting for a meeting of the Secondary Heads Group;
- Theoretically, the Council could only have a conversation about improving performance with maintained schools. However, although no longer responsible to the Council, there had been no problems with the academies participating in the new initiatives being developed to improve pupil performance;
- Attracting good teachers to Milton Keynes continued to be a problem, although some money was being set aside in 2015 for this purpose;
- The interests of schools and the interests of individual pupils were not necessarily the same thing. Schools often had an eye on external reporting requirements when they should be working for what was best for pupils;
- The performance tables on which the report and action plan were based were for the 'gold standard' of 5 or more A\* - C GCSE grades including English and Maths. School League tables based on all subjects would be published on 29 January and that because of the changes, like for like comparisons with previous years were not possible.

The Committee was of the view that one of the aims of a good education was to equip pupils to be as ready for work as possible, rather than just bolster a school's position in the performance tables. The new regime for results analysis penalised not only pupils who were taking vocational qualifications, but also those schools which were aware of their pupil's needs and offered a range of vocational courses. The Committee would be interested to see any evidence that pupils taking vocational courses were more ready for work than those just taking academic subjects.

The two lowest performing schools were both in Bletchley and the Committee expressed the hope that they would receive additional support to improve their performances. The Committee was advised that there was a danger of getting too focussed on a single cohort as one of the schools in Bletchley had recently received a 'Good' OFSTED rating; there was more than just GCSEs going on in schools.

The Committee also learnt that as well as trying to address immediate issues, schools were trying to build on what was coming up as the results for the current Key Stage 2 cohort were very good and boded well for the future.

The Committee then scrutinised the Action Plan which had been developed to address the concerns considered by the report and learnt that as all schools were different, the Action Plan had been developed around 6-7 themes which schools could adapt to their

individual circumstances. The Council's Corporate Director People said that he and his team were very pleased with the Action Plan and would welcome cross-party support for what they were doing.

The Committee expressed a concern that the Action Plan seemed somewhat vague, there was no timescale as to when any of these actions should be achieved, neither were they particularly quantifiable or measurable.

The Committee was reminded that the Council only had statutory responsibility for improvement in 4 secondary schools, the other 12 schools were academies which had agreed to participate in the Action Plan voluntarily. The Council could challenge schools about their performance but ultimately, they were responsible for putting their own improvement measures in place.

The Committee also learnt that Milton Keynes had a good base for in-school teacher training, but given the nature of the housing mix in the city, there was very little suitable accommodation for non-locals who wanted to come to Milton Keynes to train as teachers. The Corporate Director for People considered training good teachers locally was key to improving school performance, but the lack of suitable accommodation was holding up progress. Ideally he would like to see 'halls of residence' style accommodation being made available to trainee teachers in Milton Keynes.

#### RESOLVED –

1. That staff from Setting and School Effectiveness be requested to provide the Committee with:
  - a) Any evidence as to whether pupils taking vocational qualifications are more prepared for a workplace environment than those taking academic qualifications;
  - b) Any evidence as to whether non-native speakers of English struggle more with written English; and
  - c) A breakdown by gender as to whether females achieve better results than males under a system of continuous assessment.
2. That the Corporate Director People be requested to give consideration to including demonstration / observed lessons showing good practice as part of the regular subject networking events.
3. That the Action Plan be welcomed as a positive start to improving performance at GCSE level and that the Corporate Director People be requested to consider the addition of a column for completion dates so that progress can be measured.

4. That the Committee be supplied with details of how much time was being dedicated by Council staff to supporting schools to improve and implement the Action Plan.
5. That the Corporate Director People be requested to ensure that schools participating in the Action Plan for improvement do not concentrate solely on academic subjects to the detriment of vocational qualifications which were sometimes much more beneficial to some pupils.

#### **CYP24**

#### **MILTON KEYNES COUNCIL PLAY POLICY**

Having read the report prepared by the Assistant Director (Integrated Support and Social Care), the Committee decided that the Council's Play Policy was a cross-service issue and requested that further scrutiny be deferred until other witnesses could be invited to attend a meeting.

RESOLVED -

That consideration of the Milton Keynes Council Play Policy be deferred until such time that the Cabinet Member for Public Realm and the Service Director for Public Realm are able to attend a meeting of the Select Committee.

#### **CYP25**

#### **2015/16 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair invited members of the Committee to put forward possible suggestions for the 2015/16 Work Programme. The following items were suggested:

- Children's Social Care;
- Provision of Higher Education in Milton Keynes;
- Review of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub;
- Issues around Youth Offending, including early intervention and prevention, support for ex-offenders, Probation services for young people;
- Wider Use Funding and the possible effect of the Culture and Communities Service Review on schools and youth groups;
- Direct scrutiny of schools;
- Mental health issues affecting children and young people;
- Future of the Children and Families Partnership Board;
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Select Committee's Planning Group be requested to consider the suggestions for future items put forward at the meeting and reviews the 2014/15 Work Programme for any outstanding items in order to prepare a draft Work Programme for 2015/16 for submission to the Scrutiny Management Committee.

2. That the Planning Group be requested to review the list of resolutions made during 2014/15 to check progress and include details in the Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report.

**CYP26**

**MATTERS FOR REPORT**

The Select Committee noted:

- (a) the written response of the Cabinet Member for Children and School Improvement to the recommendations made at the meeting held on 12 November 2014;
- (b) that the Children and Families Partnership had met on 24 November 2014. The Chair further reported that the Partnership had also met that morning and had received a report on the new Probation Service arrangements, reviewed the Health and Wellbeing Strategy as well as discussing its own future; and
- (c) that the service and support provided to learning disabled children and their families by Furze House had been rated as Good by OFSTED, following an inspection in December 2014.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.05 PM