



Minutes of the meeting of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S STRATEGY GROUP held on FRIDAY 22 SEPTEMBER at 9.00 AM.

- Present:**
- |                                    |   |   |
|------------------------------------|---|---|
| Councillor Sandra Clark<br>(Chair) | - | MKC Cabinet Member  |
| Vanessa Gwynn                      | - | Corporate Director Learning and Development – MKC                   |
| Carolyn Boyd                       | - | Group Director Strategy, Commissioning and Quality                  |
| Colin Black                        | - | Thames Valley Police  |
| Jill Wilkinson                     | - | Head of Children's Services/Deputy Director of Primary Care, MKPCT  |
| Naomi Eisenstadt                   | - | Non Executive Director – MKPCT                                      |
| Ian Revell                         | - | Chief Executive, YMCA, representing the Voluntary Sector            |
| Michael Toze                       | - | Committee Manager – MKC   |
| Nick Hicks                         | - | Director of Public Health, Milton Keynes Council/Primary Care Trust |
- Apologies:**
- |                       |   |   |
|-----------------------|---|---|
| Barbara Kennedy       | - | Chief Executive - MKPCT                             |
| Simon Viccars         | - | Headteacher, Leon Secondary School & Sports College |
| Maggie Southcote-Want | - | Director of Nursing, Milton Keynes Hospital         |
| John Liversidge       | - | Chief Superintendent Thames Valley Police           |

### 1. MINUTES

RESOLVED –

That the Minutes of the Children and Young People's Strategy Group held on 21 July 2006 be approved as a correct record, subject to it being noted that the meeting finished at 12:10 p.m., not 12:10 a.m.

### 2. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

The Group noted that the Childcare Bill had now been enacted.

### 3. JOINT AREA REVIEW ACTION PLAN

The Group noted that Joint Area Review (JAR) Action Plan had been discussed at Policy Development Committee earlier that week. It had been observed that the section on youth services should consider outreach work. Also, the section on exclusion should focus more on preventing exclusion rather than acting once the exclusion had happened.

The JAR Action Plan would now go to Cabinet.

The Group noted that Item 2 on page 9 about school staff training ought to be phrased in such a way as to make it clear that the training was compulsory.

The Group suggested that Item 6 on page 10 could be confusing, as the mention of a “catalogue of services” suggested wide availability for all, while “referral pathway” suggested a rationing of access.

The Group stressed the importance of information sharing.

RESOLVED –

That the JAR Action Plan be supported.

#### **4. LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S BLOCK**

The Group noted that the Local Area Agreement (LAA) was still being amended, and would go on being amended until December, although a copy would go to the Government Office at the end of September. At the moment Government feedback was that some targets might be over-optimistic.

The Group noted that the proposal of spending school reserves had been removed from the LAA as it would require primary legislation, but was still being pursued on a voluntary basis locally.

The Group noted that the Police were still pursuing the policy of seizing the goods of drugs offenders, but there were limits on the value of goods that could be seized, and cases took a while to get through the courts. The Police were currently trying to recruit a specialist to work in this area.

The Group expressed surprise that according to Item 2.1.4 primary school children had lower self-esteem than secondary school children. It was suggested that this might be due to the way in which the question was asked and the responses measured. Carolyn Boyd would look into the statistics. The Group also pointed out that self-esteem could be an inaccurate measure of problems, as young offenders often had a very high self-esteem.

RESOLVED –

That the LAA's continuing development be noted.

#### **5. CHILDREN'S TRUST COMMISSIONING STRATEGY**

The Group noted that the Commissioning Strategy was now taking a more locality-focused approach, looking issues for children in particular estates rather than across the city as a whole. The LAA had stimulated this, and as an example the targets for reducing teenage pregnancy focused on three estates. The Group expressed its support for this smaller focus, since overall statistics often missed variations between wards.

The Group suggested that attainment should also be considered explicitly, and schools should be brought into this. The Authority had to be prepared to act as a critical friend to schools.

RESOLVED –

That the emerging Children's Trust Commissioning Strategy be noted.

## **6. LOCAL SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD UPDATE**

The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Strategy Group had now had its first meeting. It had largely been considering its membership and structure, and was advertising for a Chair.

The LSCB Strategy Group meeting had agreed that any under-spend would be held over as a contingency for case reviews.

Cllr Sandra Clark expressed a wish to meet with the group.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the LSCB update be noted.
- 2) That a meeting between Cllr Sandra Clark and the LSCB group be organised.

## **7. PLAY STRATEGY**

The Group noted that the existing Play Strategy had now been in place for three years and was due to expire. It now needed to become a Children's Trust document, with more emphasis on work with partners such as schools.

I Revell noted that he had been to the related Play Conference, which had been very successful.

The Group observed that the document was currently very primary school focused, and needed to consider more issues relating to older children and young people

The Group noted that the document needed to be stronger and more focused on certain issues in order to get the £500,000 National Lottery funding, which would provide funding for three years. An application would have to be made by 13 November.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the current draft Play Strategy be welcomed.
- 2) That the issue of the National Lottery bid be considered in finalising the Play Strategy.

## **8. CHILDRENS SERVICES BUDGET**

The Group noted that the first major variance was against Dedicated Schools Grant, with the final settlement being less than was expected. The

shortfall was currently being balanced against nursery funding and would be ironed out during Period 6.

The Group noted that the second major variance was a £1.4 million projected overspend on children's social care, specifically residential placements. Unfortunately there was no obvious way to reduce demand, although in the long term the ways in which demand was met would be considered more closely through the commissioning strategy. Funding for discretionary services such as libraries, leisure and youth services would be affected as a result of the overspend.

The Group noted a letter from Barbara Kennedy, which commented on overspending in the Primary Care Trust (PCT), which would lead to extensive cost-cutting measures, including vacancies being held open. This would make it difficult for the different agencies involved in Children and Young People's services to integrate their budgets. Making adequate provision for growth would also be difficult in these circumstances. The Group noted that budget problems in the PCT, Milton Keynes Council and Thames Valley Police were exacerbated by the use of out of date population figures, and also the practice of top-slicing what increased settlements were made. There were growing school reserves, but these could not be used for other children and youth services.

RESOLVED –

That the budget performances be noted.

## **9. SYSTEMS THINKING - VANGUARD PROJECT**

The Group noted that HBS, with whom the Council had contracted its back office services in January 2004, used Vanguard as their preferred subcontractor. Vanguard offered a service called Systems Thinking, in which they acted as a customer and provided detailed analysis and feedback. This had previously been done in other Council departments, including Housing, Benefits and Streetcare, and would now happen in Learning and Development.

The review would probably take a thematic approach, although it would possibly also compare and contrast issues from different localities. It was noted that Systems Thinking did not give great regard to Performance Indicators, as it was felt they could distort service provision around targets.

It was asked if Systems Thinking could be extended to partner organisations, and it was expected that this would be the case.

RESOLVED –

Vanguard would be invited to the next meeting of the Children and Young People's Strategy Group to discuss their approach to the services of the Children's Trust.

## **10. REPORT OF THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER**

RESOLVED –

That the report be noted.

## **11. PRIMARY CARE TRUST COMMISSIONING STRATEGY**

Nick Hicks from the Primary Care Trust (PCT) presented the PCT Commissioning Strategy. This was tied in to the requirement to publish how the PCT spent its money. The whole document was 70 pages, but it was hoped that the online version with links to other documents, including strategies from other partners, would be more user-friendly. The document was formatted around where the PCT was now and where it hoped to be. The current draft was still being worked on, but it was now online and would be continuously updated.

The Group suggested that there was a need to further emphasise the role of schools and the voluntary sector. The Group also felt that the statistics on page seven needed to highlight more clearly the fact that the Milton Keynes population was exceptionally young, and growing in contrast to the national picture.

The Group expressed concern about the fact that Milton Keynes had a higher than average infant mortality rate, and felt this should be taken into account more directly in the risk factors to be reduced.

The Group noted that although poor oral health in children might well be an important issue, Milton Keynes Council saw behavioural issues as a higher priority.

The Group suggested that the Joint Area Review be mentioned more explicitly on page 9. It was noted that the criteria for the user experience survey were nationally set, and this ought to be made clearer in the document.

The Group asked for more information on the patient experience scores for young people.

The Group asked that funding for support for children with behavioural issues should be considered on page 10. It was noted that the document being considered was only a summary, and information in the full document would be more detailed.

The Group suggested that the improvement in the numbers of children surviving with complex disabilities and health problems be considered, as this had very significant public cost implications. It was noted that an increasing number of children surviving situations such as premature birth did not necessarily mean an increasing number of children with disabilities. However, anecdotal evidence suggested that there was a rise in the number of children with very complex disabilities. Nick Hicks would look

into finding an appropriate statistical measure of this, as well as ways of preventing disabilities through improved screening, dietary advice etc.

RESOLVED –

- 1) That the draft PCT Commissioning Strategy be noted.
- 2) That Jill Wilkinson present more information about patient experience scores for young people.
- 3) That Nick Hicks consider how to include information on children with multiple/complex disabilities in the next iteration of the Commissioning Strategy.

## **12. MK COMMUNITY STRATEGY – MONITORING REPORT**

RESOLVED –

That the Monitoring Report be noted.

## **13. MK GROWTH STRATEGY CONSULTATION**

The Group noted that Children and Young People issues ought to be more prominently considered in the issue of Milton Keynes' growth. In particular, the key agencies ought to be made aware of the volume and pace of change.

The Group expressed concern about the issue of housing, with young people often unable to find anywhere to live. Many of the affordable housing schemes focused on key workers, a term which had a very narrow public service definition. There was a need for more socially rented accommodation.

The Group expressed its support for a Milton Keynes University as it would help to provide a wider variety of educational opportunities for the young people of Milton Keynes.

RESOLVED –

That the Growth Strategy consultation be amended to reflect the above points and submitted by the end of September.

## **14. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

- a) Friday 17 November 2006
- b) Friday 26 January 2007
- c) Friday 30 March 2007

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 10.55 AM