



Minutes of the meeting of the LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT POLICY DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE held on TUESDAY 19 SEPTEMBER 2006 at 7.30 pm

**Present:** Councillor Miles (Chair)  
Councillors Dransfield, Drewett, Eaton, Holroyd (substitute for Councillor Lloyd), Irons, Seymour and Snell

**Co-optee:** Mr J McAuley (Parent Governor Representative - Primary)

**Officers:** J Partridge (Overview and Scrutiny Officer), V Gwynn (Corporate Director Learning and Development), C Boyd (Group Director Strategy, Commissioning and Quality), J Cove (Group Director SureStart and Community Learning), D Gamble (Group Director School Improvement and Planning), M Dolling (Assistant Director Schools Planning and Resources), L Westlake (Assistant Director Support Services), T Lamming (Principal Community, Economy and Culture Officer), M Edens (Senior Education Officer – Planning and School Organisation), P Lamacraft (Cultural Strategy Manager), and S Heap (Democratic Services Manager)

**Apologies:** Councillors Lloyd and Wharton

**Also Present:** Councillors Sandra Clark, E Henderson, Legg and McKenzie

## **LD14 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED -**

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Learning and Development Policy Development Committee held on 13 July 2006, be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to the following text being added to Minute LD12 (Olney Schools Project Update):

“The Committee specifically noted the delays which occurred as a result of:

- (a) problems with the site plans;
- (b) tenders being in excess of estimate; and
- (c) delays in the supply of equipment.”.

**LD15                    DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

Members of the Committee declared Interests as set out in the Schedule attached to these minutes.

Councillor Legg declared a personal interest in Item 7 (West Bletchley Review of School Places) as a Governor of Wellsmead Infant School

**LD16                    JOINT AREA REVIEW ACTION PLAN**

The Committee considered the Joint Area Review Action Plan which the Cabinet would be considering at its meeting on 26 September 2006, before submission to the Inspectors.

The Committee noted that the Action Plan addressed the actions to be undertaken by all partners and as such would act as a co-ordinating document between the different service providers to provide a multi-agency approach to working with vulnerable children.

It was suggested that the move away from building based provision for the youth service, which it was noted was already happening, should feature in the Action Plan.

The Committee also considered the support available for permanently excluded students and for students facing permanent exclusion from schools. It was reported that discussions were ongoing with the secondary schools with a view to establishing a protocol for hard to place students. It was suggested that support for schools should be concentrated on students at threat of exclusion with a view to keeping them in school.

It was noted that there had recently been a large increase in the number of students in alternative education as a result of requests from schools for additional support. However, schools hoped to increase their alternative education provision in future.

With regard to budget reductions to be made by the Primary Care Trust it was noted that they were likely to affect a range of services and discussions were ongoing with the Primary Care Trust on the likely impact on access for children and young people to Child Adolescent Mental Health Services.

In answer to a question it was reported that measures were being considered to mitigate a potential overspend on the Children's Services Placement Budget.

**RESOLVED -**

That the Cabinet be advised, when considering the Joint Area Review Action Plan at its meeting on 26 September 2006, that the Committee is of the view that the Actions should include:

- (a) a move away from building based provision for the youth service; and

- (b) provision of enhanced support for pupils facing permanent exclusion, particularly with regard to the nature of the support that pupils could be expected to receive.

## **LD17 CULTURAL STRATEGY REVIEW**

Further to Minute LD06, the Committee considered a further draft of the Cultural Strategy, which was due to be considered by the Cabinet at its meeting on 7 November 2006.

It was reported that once adopted by the Cabinet partner organisations would also be asked to adopt the Strategy. The Strategy would address the role of each partner and would act as a co-ordinating document between the different service providers and as an overarching framework to support a strategic approach to culture across Milton Keynes.

The Committee noted that the Strategy had been the subject of extensive consultation with all elements of the community.

The Committee's attention was also drawn to how its previous suggestions regarding the draft Strategy had been addressed, together with the comments made by Members at an informal meeting the previous week, which included the relationship between the draft Strategy and the Council's Sport and Leisure Strategy.

It was suggested that the draft Strategy contained an imbalance in favour of the arts to the detriment of other elements, particularly sport and leisure. Officers reported that the perceived imbalance was because the arts did not currently benefit from a dedicated strategy, where other elements did. The Committee suggested that if the Cultural Strategy was to be an overarching strategy, an Arts Strategy should be developed, rather than being included in the overarching strategy.

It was also noted that the draft Strategy addressed Milton Keynes as a regional centre providing services for people both inside and outside the Borough.

The Committee recognised that it was essential that the Strategy was adequately integrated so as to include all Black and Minority Ethnic groups throughout Milton Keynes.

**RESOLVED –**

That a Review Group, comprising 1 Conservative Group representative, 1 Labour Group representative and 1 Liberal Democrat representative, be established to review the Cultural Strategy and make recommendations direct to the Cabinet.

## **LD18 WEST BLETCHLEY REVIEW OF SCHOOL PLACES**

The Committee received details of the first stage of a review of the organisation of primary schools in the West Bletchley area of Milton

Keynes resulting from a fall in pupil numbers and the resulting overcapacity of school places.

It was noted that the first stage of the review had been conducted by a group comprising a cross-section of officers from many departments across the Council and two headteachers representing the Primary Headteachers' Strategy Group and the National Association of Head Teachers. The Group had, as well as collecting data, held individual discussions on the options with the headteacher and chair of governors of each of the schools and also allowed a period for the schools to respond formally.

The Committee considered five options identified by the Review Group as possibly of merit to progress to consultation which it noted would be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration. The five options were to:

1. Amalgamate Rivers Infant and Rickley Junior into one primary school and Wellsmead Infant and Wellsmead Junior into another primary schools on two separate sites yet to be determined. Provide a Children's Centre at Abbeys Primary and accommodate an early years setting at Chestnuts Primary. Review defined areas.
2. Amalgamate Rivers Infant with Wellsmead Infant, and Rickley Junior with Wellsmead Junior on two sites yet to be determined. Provide a Children's Centre at Abbeys Primary and accommodate an early years setting at Chestnuts Primary. Review defined areas.
3. Amalgamate Rickley with Wellsmead Junior on one site yet to be determined and keep the two infant feeder schools, possibly under federation arrangements. Provide a Children's Centre at Abbeys Primary and accommodate an early years setting at Chestnuts Primary. Review defined areas.
4. Maintain all the schools in their current forms.
5. Amalgamate Rickley, Rivers, Wellsmead Infant and Junior as a purpose built, brand new primary school on a site yet to be determined. Provide a Children's Centre at Abbeys Primary and accommodate an early years setting at Chestnuts Primary. Review defined areas.

It was reported that West Bletchley Parish Council was of the view that the existing schools should be retained with reduced class sizes.

The Committee also heard from a local Member, who was also a Governor of one of the schools concerned, which, he pointed out, had already taken a number of measures to deal with the issue of falling rolls. The Member also drew attention to the lack of a school travel plan to support any of the suggested changes and suggested that over capacity should be addressed by seeking alternative uses

for the surplus space which would negate the need for any school closures.

It was noted that officers were suggesting that both options four and five should not be considered further as they had not received support during the initial consultations, however the Committee recognised that option four was the one supported by the Parish Council and was likely to attract the support of the majority of the community and therefore should be included in the consultation.

The Committee considered the possibility of alternative uses for the surplus space at the schools and noted that officers had considered this possibility.

It was also suggested that the model adopted in rural schools to ensure their continued viability could be used, however, it was recognised that the situation in West Bletchley was not comparable.

RESOLVED –

That the Cabinet be advised that it is the view of the Committee that:

1. Option 5 should no longer be considered;
2. full feasibility studies and option appraisals should be carried out on Options 1, Option 2, and Option 3, to include decisions on sites and defined areas; and
3. Options 1 to 4 should then proceed to consultation

**LD19 ACADEMY FOR MILTON KEYNES - UPDATE**

The Committee received an update on progress with the proposal to replace the Sir Frank Markham Community School with an Academy.

**LD20 UPDATE ON OLNEY OUESDALE CAMPUS**

The Committee received an update on progress towards the completion of the project.

**LD21 PUBLIC ART STRATEGY**

The Committee received the draft Public Art Strategy.

**LD22 PLAY STRATEGY**

The Committee received the draft Play Strategy.

**LD23 THE CHILDREN'S COMMISSIONER ANNUAL REPORT 2005/06**

The Committee received a briefing note on the Children's Commissioner Annual Report 2005/06

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9.45 PM