

EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SELECT COMMITTEE HELD ON WEDNESDAY 16 SEPTEMBER 2009 AT 7.30 PM.

**CYP05 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2009-11**

The Committee considered the draft Children and Young People's Plan, which would be formally agreed by the Children's Trust Board on 29 September 2009 and presented to Cabinet on 27 October 2009.

It was noted that new legislation was expected to be passed in November 2009 which would give statutory responsibility to Children's Trusts for the Children and Young People's Plan in the future.

The Children and Young People's Performance Improvement Plan, which was required as part of the Department for Children, Schools and Families Intervention and closely linked with the Children and Young People's Plan, would be approved by the Children and Young People's Improvement Board on 30 September 2009.

The Interim Assistant Change Director gave a short presentation on the Plan.

The Committee heard that there were six key areas identified that needed to be addressed in the first year. These were:

1. Improving strategic leadership of Children and Young People's Services
2. Improved Governance and Strategic Commissioning
3. Raised standards and achievement of vulnerable and underperforming groups, especially 14-19
4. Improved Data and Performance Information Systems
5. Develop Partnership Working
6. Integrated working and more localised working

The Plan identified 10 outcomes under the Every Child Matters heading, which were detailed in the Improvement Plan.

Following the presentation, Members made the following comments/observations:

- Reference to “academic success” should be changed to “success”
- “Localised working” referred to officers being responsible for geographical areas
- The Inclusion Strategy should not only focus on 14-19 year olds
- The core outcome: “There is no gap in attainment between vulnerable children and young people and their peers” should be amended to read “we will reduce the gap to less than the national average...”
- The core outcome: “Milton Keynes will be a recognised centre of excellence, where the voices of children and young people and their families are paramount in determining their support and improving all aspects of their well-being and learning” should be amended to read “support needs...”
- That the core outcome: “child poverty is not a barrier to success” was a realistic aspiration

The Committee agreed to consider the Plan section by section, starting with the introduction, followed by the Every Child Matters strands, which contained high-level detail on the 10 core outcomes.

#### Introduction

During detailed consideration of the Plan, individual Members made the following comments/observations:

- The quality of the report was disappointing
- The Plan was the best draft Plan seen by Members in many years
- There was too much data missing and there was an absence of comparative and trend data
- The data needed to be benchmarked
- The Plan was ambitious and would require significant funding
- Partner organisations had been consulted through a sub-board of the Children’s Trust
- There was a lack of information regarding Learning Difficulties and Disabled (LDD) children, particularly with respect to quantifiable outcome measures.
- The changing epidemiology of certain conditions such as the increased prevalence of children with Autism and the longer survival rate of children with Downs Syndrome needed to be recognised in the Plan.

The Corporate Director, Children and Young People’s Services made the following comments:

- The Children and Young People's Directorate had been under funded in terms of performance management and data collection and was still in a transitional stage
- It was agreed that data systems needed to be improved and the Department for Children, Schools and Families had made funding available to address this "gap", with a new data team to be appointed shortly.

The issue of Statements of Special Educational Needs was discussed separately. It was noted that there needed to be data relating to the duration it takes to get a statement to be included in the Plan.

It was also noted that one of projected outcomes contained in the Improvement Plan was for there to be "reduction in the number of new statements" and that this was not helpful without quantifiable outcome measures.

The Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services explained that it was not always necessary for statements to be issued as it was bureaucratic and that there were other approaches that could be taken to better address the needs of the child. However, it was noted that robust plans were required to take this approach forward and that funding from the Government Office for the South East was being used to increase the pace of the preparation of the Implementation Strategy.

It was agreed that the Inclusion Strategy was an area of interest for the Committee and that a recommendation should be made to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for it to be considered in more detail.

### Being Healthy

Members made the following comments/observations:

- Many of the targets were dependent on strong partnership working with the Primary Care Trust
- Maternity Services was a key issue which needed to be addressed
- There was no comparative data to identify areas of weakness or strength and that this was a general issue throughout the Plan
- The wording needed to be changed to say: "ensure that health inequalities do not continue into adult life".
- Target support for teenagers and young adults might be required if issues were addressed at a younger age.

The Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services made the following comments:

- The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment needed to be more robust to inform the Plan and that this was work was ongoing

- Implementation and delivery did not always lie with Council officers, particularly with regards to schools, and it was important that the Plan reflected the need for strong partnership working

### Stay Safe

Members made the following comments/observations:

- There was no mention of undetected bullying or hate bullying and these should be reflected in the Plan
- The increase in the number of referrals to Children's Social Care was noted
- There were no actions aimed at improving neighbourhoods and communities in partnership with other agencies

The Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services stated that while there had been an increase in referrals the Common Assessment Framework was being used more effectively to reduce this number.

### Enjoy and Achieve

Members made the following comments/observations:

- The importance of parental engagement needed to be reflected in the Plan, including the support and training provided to parents
- There needed to be an effort to improve literacy levels among parents
- Some of the data needed to be checked as there appeared to be discrepancies

The Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services agreed that parental engagement was vital and explained that there were a variety of programmes currently running which aimed to assist parents in improving their engagement skills. For example, Family Learning Projects, which were run through Children's Centres.

### Achieve Economic Wellbeing

Members made the following comments/observations:

- Careers advice should be accessible to all children and young people
- There should be more Connexions Personal Advisors
- The Council needs to do more to support apprenticeship schemes
- There was a distinct lack of young people in social care roles and that this should be addressed

- There was no reference to the economic wellbeing of LDD children and young people
- The Chamber of Commerce should be involved in helping to identify any skills gaps

It was noted that there was a target for the number of LDD children and young people in Education, Employment and Training but there was currently no data.

The Corporate Director, Children and Young People's Services explained that the transfer of responsibility from the Learning and Skills Council to local authorities would put the onus on the Council to ensure that there was suitable educational and training provision for 16-19 year olds.

RESOLVED -

1. That the report be noted.
2. That the comments of the Committee be presented to the Children's Trust Board, the Children and Young People's Improvement Board and Cabinet
3. That the Committee's planning group be requested to consider ways of examining some aspects of the Plan further and to make appropriate recommendations to the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee for this work to be included in the Committee's work programme.