

Minutes of the meeting of the CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 6 MARCH 2019 at 7.00 PM

- Present:** Councillor Crooks (Chair)
Councillors Akter, Baines, M Bradburn, Brown, Buckley, Carr, Darlington, D Hopkins, V Hopkins, A Marlow (Parent Governor Representative), Miles and Wales
- Officers:** M Heath (Director of Children's Services), S Sims (Acting Head of Service for Education Sufficiency and Access), R Mascarenhas (Youth Participation Worker) and R Tidman (Overview and Scrutiny Officer)
- Apologies:** Councillor Green, I Oduko (Parent Governor Representative) and S Rahman (SACRE Representative)
- Also Present:** Councillor Nolan (Cabinet member for Children and Families), Dr Mills (MK College), Judge Venables (Family Drug and Alcohol Court), S Ainger (Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet), L Lotkowska (Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet), T Poyner (Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet) and one member of the public

CYP39 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

Councillor Baines declared an interest in agenda Item 7 (Children who are Home Educated) as his wife had home educated their children.

Councillor Carr declared an interest in agenda Item 5 (Family Drug and Alcohol Court) as the independent witness used by the Family Drug and Alcohol Court and was quoted in the report.

Councillor Buckley declared an interest in agenda Item 5 (Family Drug and Alcohol Court) as his company had been used for some of the cases.

CYP40 FAMILY DRUG AND ALCOHOL COURT (FDAC)

Witnesses: Judge Venables (FDAC) and M Heath (Director of Children's Services)

The Committee was advised that the FDAC had been operating for four and a half years from the Milton Keynes Family Court. It had proven to be a very effective model of working with high risk families who were at risk of having their children removed. The FDAC helped families solve their problems, address their addiction and in some cases go on to mentor other families. Within the Milton Keynes FDAC system 43% of children were retained at home compared to

37% across FDAC's nationally and 25% in areas with a non-FDAC approach.

The Committee heard that cost savings from the FDAC approach came from a reduced need for expert assessments, a reduction in contested proceedings and a reduced need for foster care. The FDAC process was therefore seen as kinder, cheaper, more effective and with enduring benefits for children and their families.

In response to questions the Committee noted that:

- (a) whilst up to date figures on cost savings were not available the average cost of an FDAC proceeding was £16,000 versus £26-30,000 for a standard proceeding along with further savings from reductions in foster care and positive outcomes for the children and their families;
- (b) there was to be changes to the national FDAC system with the expectation that this would potentially mean leaner support for existing and new local FDAC's; and
- (c) the joint arrangement with Buckinghamshire County Council was due to end in March 2020. The current model was aligned with having a partner and work would take place as to how the service would be delivered going forward;

RESOLVED –

1. That Judge Venables be thanked for her contribution to the Committee's discussion and for her involvement and support of the FDAC.
2. That the reassurance received as to the savings to the Council from the FDAC approach and more importantly the better outcomes for the children and families involved be noted.
3. That the Council's Children's Service be mindful of and takes into account the Committee's view that it would want to see support from the Council for the FDAC continuing after March 2020.

CYP41

PROGRESS REPORT FROM MK COLLEGE

Witness: Dr Mills (Principal & Chief Executive of MK College)

The Committee received a presentation on the future plans of MK College, including the bid for an Institute of Digital Technology to be based at Bletchley Park, plans for a centrally located single campus, changes to apprenticeship policy and developments in further education.

During the ensuing discussion the Committee noted that:

- (a) keeping two campuses was not a feasible long term option and with the development of the East/West Rail Links consideration should be given to Bletchley as a potential site for the single campus;
- (b) changes to the apprenticeship levy policy had led to a decrease in available apprenticeship placements and the Committee would like to see a partnership approach to allow for an apprenticeship 'ecosystem' to be developed in Milton Keynes;
- (c) road safety needed to be addressed to encourage safety of students and that regular refreshes of road safety messages should take place;
- (d) Milton Keynes was often innovative and forward thinking and there was concern that the sector might have missed an opportunity to break the further and higher education divide by collaborating; and
- (e) working in partnership would be critical to the success of MK College's plans and the Committee would like to see the proactive work that had already taken place between MK College and the Council officers continue to support the delivery of further education in the area.

RESOLVED -

1. That Dr Mills be thanked for her presentation and contribution to the Committee's discussion of this item.
2. That Milton Keynes College be encouraged to revisit its property strategy when considering the location of any new campus in light of further development opportunities within Bletchley, the potential Institute of Digital Technology at Bletchley Park and Bletchley Station as a major interchange on the East/West line.
3. That changes in policy to the Apprenticeship Levy be noted and all efforts by the Council to work in partnership to develop a Milton Keynes apprenticeship 'ecosystem' be supported.
4. That the concerns of the Youth Cabinet be noted and Milton Keynes College be requested to carry out regular refreshes with its students on road safety.
5. That the relationship between the further and higher education sector within Milton Keynes should be one of collaboration not competition.

6. That the Council generally be mindful of the Committee's view that the Council should be working proactively with Children's Services and Inward Investment on supporting Further Education in Milton Keynes.
7. That a copy of the PowerPoint presentation made by Dr Mills be provided to Committee members.

CYP42

REPORT FROM THE YOUTH CABINET

Witnesses: R Mascarenhas (Youth Participation Worker), S Ainger (Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet), L Lotkowska (Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet) and T Poyner (Milton Keynes Youth Cabinet)

The Committee received a presentation on the campaigns, international trip, publicity events and consultations the Youth Cabinet had been involved in during the last year.

In answer to questions the Committee noted that:

- (a) the Youth Cabinet had aspirations to expand the number of businesses that provided discounts for the All in One Card. Particularly they would like to see more leisure centres offer discounts to help improve mental and physical health of young people and to ensure the bus service continued to keep prices low;
- (b) the Youth Cabinet would like to increase the amount of engagement work it was able to do with primary schools, as this was currently limited due to officer support leading to a focus of the Youth Cabinet's work being at the secondary school level;
- (c) the Youth Cabinet was appreciative of the funding it received from the Council which meant it could deliver better events and campaigns. There was however two areas where the Youth Cabinet felt the Council could do more to support its work which were funding for another youth worker to support work with primary schools and to provide funding for an additional residential as this had recently been reduced from two events to one;
- (d) members of the Youth Cabinet had been involved in the 'Big Debate' and other activities with the MK Futures team and given that the city that would be here in 30 years would be their city it was important that young people continued to engage in the work around MK 2050; and
- (e) a number of ex Youth Cabinet members had stood in Borough and parliamentary elections and whilst one is yet to be

elected, this is only a matter of time and the Committee hoped that being part of the Youth Cabinet was just the beginning of their involvement with public life.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Youth Cabinet members be thanked for their contribution to the Committee's discussion of this item.
2. That, as a number of the members of the Youth Cabinet would be completing their terms of office, those members be encouraged to continue to influence the development of what will be their city in 2050 and that they continue their involvement in public life.
3. That Roz Mascarenhas be congratulated on her award at the Youth Voice Star Awards as Youth Voice Worker of the Year for the London, South East and East Regions.
4. That Milton Keynes Council's Children's Service be mindful of and, takes into account the Committee's view:
 - (a) That consideration shall be given to additional funding for a youth worker to support the work of the Youth Cabinet with primary schools.
 - (b) That the reduction in the number of Residential's from two to one shall be reconsidered.
 - (c) That the continuing engagement of the Youth Cabinet and MK Futures is important.
 - (d) That consideration should be given to how primary schools could be better engaged with the Youth Cabinet and its campaigns.
5. That a copy of the PowerPoint presentation made by the Youth Cabinet be provided to Committee members.

CYP43

CHILDREN WHO ARE HOME EDUCATED

Witnesses: M Heath (Director of Children's Services) and S Sims (Acting Head of Service for Education Sufficiency and Access)

The Committee was provided with a summary of the briefing paper which set out the legal position in terms of children who were educated at home and how the Council assessed whether a child was receiving a suitable education or not. It was noted that while numbers of children being home educated across the country were increasing, figures for Milton Keynes were low in comparison and the service area hoped that the decision to home educate was for

positive reasons rather than because parents felt they had no other choice.

The Committee noted that:

- (a) the Council needed to ensure that they had the right balance with regard to safeguarding without micro managing or pushing the boundaries of what was allowed under legislation;
- (b) in terms of safeguarding the Council had a duty to know where children were and that it was up to the school the child had left to highlight any concerns;
- (c) it would be useful to develop links for example with the Youth Cabinet so children who were being home educated could engage with that process; and
- (d) the Council should look at how it could add value to home educators perhaps by supporting, mentoring and providing networking opportunities.

RESOLVED -

- 1. That the Acting Head of Service for Education Sufficiency and Access be thanked for his contribution to the Committee's discussion of this item.
- 2. That it be noted that home education is a difficult area for the Council to manage due to the nature of the legislation.
- 3. That Milton Keynes Council's Children's Service be mindful of and takes into account the Committee's view that:
 - (a) It should always be a positive choice taken by a parent to home educate their child;
 - (b) Despite concerns regarding the registering, monitoring and safeguarding, on the whole it was considered that the Council had got this balance 'about right' and the Council should not exceed the boundaries of what it is allowed to do under the legislation.
 - (c) That the Council consider the value it can offer to those who choose to home educate their children in terms of support, mentoring and networking schemes.

CYP44

REPORT OF THE CABINET MEMBER

Witnesses: Councillor Nolan (Cabinet member for Children & Families) and M Heath (Director of Children's Services)

The Committee received a presentation from the Cabinet member for Children & Families setting out the achievements and challenges the service area has faced over the last 12 months.

The Committee congratulated the Portfolio Holder and the Director on what had been achieved over the last year in schools and social care. The Committee particularly highlighted the robustness of the Children's Services budget as other councils were struggling and that this was a testament to the focus Milton Keynes Council had placed on early years interventions.

RESOLVED -

1. That the Cabinet member for Children and Families and the Director of Children's Services be congratulated and thanked for what has been achieved over the last 12 months in Children's Services.
2. That a copy of the PowerPoint presentation made by the Cabinet member be provided to Committee members.

CYP45

PROPOSALS FOR 2019/20 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme for 2019/20.

RESOLVED

That the items for the 2019/20 Work Programme be approved by the Committee for endorsement by the Scrutiny Management Committee.

CYP46

MINUTES

RESOLVED -

1. That the Minutes of the Committee's meeting held on 9 January 2019 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record, subject to:
 - (a) The words 'Supplementary School' in Minute CYP28 being amended to 'Learning Centre';
 - (b) The words 'the Institute of Computing run by Milton Keynes College at Bletchley Park' replacing the words 'the putative Institute of Computing at Bletchley Park would, if run by Milton Keynes College,' in clause (e) of the preamble to Minute CYP30;
 - (c) The words 'creative design' replacing the word 'arts' in the seventh paragraph of Minute CYP31;
 - (d) The word 'higher' replacing the words 'Post-18' in resolution (c) of Minute CYP31; and

- (e) The resolution at Minute CYP36 being deleted and replaced with the words: 'It was noted that the draft would be circulated to members of the Committee and other interested parties, including the Cabinet members for Children and Families and Economic Growth and Community Partnership, the Acting Director of Children's Services and the Service Director (Growth, Economy and Culture) for comment.'

CYP47 CALL FOR EVIDENCE LETTER

The Committee considered the draft letter to be sent to potential witnesses to the session on the contribution of education and skills to the future growth of Milton Keynes.

RESOLVED –

That the contents of the Call for Evidence letter be endorsed.

CYP48 TASK AND FINISH GROUP – ALTERNATE EDUCATION (PRIMARY)

The Committee noted the update from Councillor D Hopkins, the Chair of the Task & Finish Group on Alternative Education in the primary sector.

CYP49 CHILDREN'S SERVICES – PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Committee noted the set of performance indicators which had been provided to help inform the Committee about the work of Children's Services

CYP50 REPORTS FROM COMMITTEES

The Committee noted that the reports were available to view from the Corporate Parenting Panel held on 22 January 2019 and the Health and Wellbeing Board held on 6 February 2019.

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9:55 PM