

CHESHIRE EAST COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the **Children and Families Scrutiny Committee**
held on Tuesday, 29th June, 2010 at Committee Suite 1,2 & 3, Westfields,
Middlewich Road, Sandbach CW11 1HZ

PRESENT

Councillor R Westwood (Chairman)
Councillor D Neilson (Vice Chairman)

Councillors D Beckford, D Flude, J Goddard, T Jackson, A Kolker, W Livesley,
M Parsons, A Ranfield and M Simon

Apologies

Councillors A Barratt and G Merry and Gill Kelly

102 ALSO PRESENT

Councillor H Gaddum – Children and Families Portfolio Holder
Councillor R Bailey – Cabinet Support Member

103 OFFICERS PRESENT

Lorraine Butcher - Head of Services for Children and Families
Mark Bayley -Quality Assurance Manager
Fintan Bradley - Services Manager Improvement & Achievement
Andy Kent – Partnership Lead - Schools
Mark Nedderman – Senior Scrutiny Officer

104 CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Ged Roper

105 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2010 be approved
as a correct record.

106 DECLARATION OF INTEREST/PARTY WHIP

Councillor D Flude declared a Personal interest on the grounds that she was a
Director of EIPC Ltd.

107 PUBLIC SPEAKING TIME/OPEN SESSION

There were no members of the public present who wished to address the
Committee.

108 WORK PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Chairman referred Members to item 97 in the minutes of the meeting held on 1 June 2010 which contained the proposed Work Programme for 2010/2011. The Chairman informed the Committee that the expected date for the final report in respect of the review of Family Support Services should be December 2010 and not October as stated in the minutes.

Lorraine Butcher Head of Childrens and Family Services suggested that the Committee may benefit from a separate briefing on the Council's admissions policy in the future.

RESOLVED – That subject to the date in respect of the final report in on the Family Support Services Review being changed from October 2010 to December 2010, and to an item being added to brief the Committee on school admissions regulations at its next meeting on 27 July, the work programme be approved.

109 **CONSULTATION ON SCHOOL RE-ORGANISATION PROPOSALS IN MACCLESFIELD**

Lorraine Butcher Head of Service Children and Families reported on the consultation on the future of Macclesfield High School.

Lorraine outlined the context of the current consultation which emanated from the closure of Ryles Park High School on 31 August 2004. This was followed by an unsuccessful pathfinder bid to build a new school.

In February 2004, the Macclesfield Secondary Schools Re-organisation Members Panel agreed to consult on the re-design and modernisation of existing buildings on either the Henbury High or Park Lane site. The creation of a 6 form entry school at Park Lane became the County Council's preferred option and in September 2007, Macclesfield High School opened on the Park lane site costing approximately £28m, including funding from the NWDA.

The new school then continued to produce declining standards , for instance:

- 2007 – 5A*-C GCSE including English and Maths = 35%
- 2009 – 5A*-C GCSE including English and Maths = 32%

In August 2009, the Chair of Governors sought support from the Council regarding the future of the school.

Ofsted issued a notice to improve following an inspection.

All of these issues were against a backdrop of surplus school places in Macclesfield, and it was predicted that the projected secondary roll across Macclesfield of 3900 by 2015 could be accommodated in 3 school and that Macclesfield High School would have a surplus of 28% by this date.

Lorraine also pointed to the demographics within Macclesfield which pointed to the fact that Macclesfield High currently had and was likely to

continue to have the highest intake of pupils living within the most deprived areas in Macclesfield. Advice was currently being taken on the possibility of reviewing admission arrangements.

There were 8 options for consideration :

- A No change: Macclesfield High continues in its current form
- B Establish a Macclesfield Academy involving Macclesfield High School with another local high school
- C Establish a single Trust working across the schools in Macclesfield(with the closure of Macclesfield High)
- D Create a 3-19 school which integrates a local primary school on the Macclesfield High School site
- E Re-launch Macclesfield High School as a specialist vocational/technical school
- F Close Macclesfield High School and redistribute pupils across the remaining secondary schools
- G Use the Macclesfield High School site for post 16 provision for the whole town
- H Current Macclesfield Schools each lose one form entry to Macclesfield High School .

The Council had recently met with all Heads of schools in Macclesfield and the principal of Macclesfield college and although this group had distilled the 8 original options into 3, the favoured option was option E.

The Council believed however that the decision on formal consultation should be deferred but that informal consultations should take place up to Friday 8 October 2010. This would allow all options to be explored in greater depth.

In the meantime, it was also suggested that advice be sought from Cheshire East Admissions Forum on admission arrangements in Macclesfield, and that further discussions take place with David Rutley MP in light of new information from the Government.

RESOLVED – That consideration of this matter be deferred to a special meeting of this Committee on a date to be determined to consider a full and comprehensive report on all the issues surrounding the future of Macclesfield High School.

110 **CHANGING POLICY LANDSCAPE IN CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Andy Kent, Partnership Lead – Schools, outlined the key changes in Education as announced by the new coalition government to date.

The key Changes were:

- The revised primary curriculum will not go ahead and schools are to continue with the current curriculum – but the additional INSET day for primaries in 2020/11 is maintained
- A new national curriculum will be published
- Development of the new Diplomas in science, humanities and languages, due to be introduced from September 2011, will cease immediately
- State schools will be able to offer the iGCSE (International General Certificate of Secondary Education)
- The General teaching Council, Contact Point, and British Educational Communications and Technology Agency and Qualification and Curriculum Development Agency to be scrapped
- Budgets for the Training and Development Agency and National College to be cut.
- The introduction of the Vetting and Barring scheme and the need to register with the Independent Safeguarding Authority has been halted until a review has been undertaken
- Contactpoint database discontinued.
- The Children, Schools and families Act, which received royal assent prior to the election omitted the proposed:
 - Pupil/Parent guarantees, home/school agreements and parent satisfaction surveys;
 - PSHE and Sex and relationship education becoming compulsory
 - Enhanced role of school improvement partners
 - licence to teach.

The Government had also announced plans for an Academies Bill and an Education and Children Bill in the Autumn.

The Academies Bill was currently at the committee stage in the House of Lords, but there were expected to be significant amendments.

The Bill would allow all schools to apply for academy status with no requirement to consult stakeholders. These would be new forms of academy.

There were significant impacts in the way that academies would operate, including the right to set individual terms and greater flexibility around the length of school day and working year. In addition, Academies would be required to set pay and conditions including moving outside the school teachers pay and conditions document and national pay scales.

Academies would also need to provide or commission services currently provided centrally, but it was not clear whether and at what cost Local Authority Services would be available for academies to purchase. Governance arrangements for new academies were also unclear.

The Education and children Bill would:

- Give greater curriculum freedoms/slimmer national curriculum
- Reading test at the end of year 1
- Additional powers to 'improve behaviour'
- Reformation of Ofsted

- Pupil premium

RESOLVED – (a) That the report be received

(b) That the Head of Service Children and Families be requested to produce a briefing sheet for all Members of the Committee based upon the presentation given at the meeting, particularly to provide an overview of the budgetary situation as it relates to Cheshire East.

111 PRESENTATION ON ADOPTION, PRIOR TO A FORTHCOMING INSPECTION OF THE SERVICE BY OFSTED

This matter was withdrawn from the agenda.

112 PERFORMANCE - OUTTURN

The Committee considered a report of the Quality Assurance Manager, Children and Family Services providing an update on the reporting of performance across Children and Family Services.

Significant work had been undertaken within Children & Families Extended Leadership Team to evaluate performance following the Quarter 4 period and to establish performance targets for 2010-11. The establishment of the exception reports for High Risk indicators had continued and was now being integrated into Service planning procedures. The report had been submitted to Scrutiny at a time of considerable change at a national level in terms of education policy and the role and function of national agencies. Recent announcements had already influenced performance reporting, in particular with the demise of the Comprehensive Area Assessment process.

There was positive progress to report since the presentation of the report card at the end of Quarter 3. These included:

- 16 National Indicators (20%) now had data added for Quarter 4 which was not available earlier in the year.
- There had been a reduction in the number of High Risk Indicators from 13 to 11 with an increased rigour in the interrogation of data for other NI's. This had resulted in clear actions being taken to address areas of concern within other High Risk Indicators which as yet had not necessarily resulted in a measurable improvement over a sustained period.
- The report card now included named service teams/managers who would have direct accountability for identified National Indicators.

The report card now included a comparison of performance against the Audit Commission ratings which enabled the Council to compare Cheshire East performance against the national picture.

The Quality Assurance Manager circulated a supplementary sheet detailing recent National changes to the performance reporting structure for Children's and Families including the cessation of the process to report on a quarterly basis an Ofsted profile which summarised the performance of all schools and services assessed by Ofsted. Also the 'Tell us' Survey had also ceased as part of national changes.

The paper also explained the current position in connection with the 2009/2010 outturn and outlined proposals to link performance with service planning. In addition the paper provided information on progress with the 13 high risk indicators reported upon in quarter 3.

RESOLVED – (a) That the performance report as shown within Appendix A outlining the latest position of performance reporting at Quarter 4 be noted.

(b) That the planning process as outlined in Appendix B in order to address potential areas of underperformance be endorsed.

(c) That the Quality Assurance Manager be requested to submit a report on the full outturn picture for Children and Families to the September meeting of this Committee.

113 **CORPORATE PLAN**

The Committee considered a report of the Head of Human Resources enclosing for comment the draft Corporate Plan which was due to be considered by Cabinet on 19 July prior to making a recommendation to Council regarding its formal adoption on 22 July 2010.

RESOLVED – That the report be received and cabinet be informed that this Committee has no comments to make on the draft Corporate Strategy .

114 **FORWARD PLAN - EXTRACTS**

The Committee considered the forward plan as it related to Children and Family Services.

RESOLVED – That the forward plan be noted.

115 **CONSULTATIONS FROM CABINET**

There were no consultations from Cabinet.

116 **START TIME OF MEETINGS**

The Committee considered the possibility of moving to afternoon meetings to avoid potential clashes with Corporate Management Team meetings.

RESOLVED – That meetings of this committee remain with 10.30 am start times.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.40 pm

Councillor R Westwood (Chairman)