

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN & LIFELONG LEARNING SCRUTINY PANEL HELD IN THE
BOURGES & VIERSEN ROOMS, TOWN HALL, PETERBOROUGH**

4 MARCH 2009

Present:	Councillors Walsh (Chairman), C Burton, S Day, Khan, Saltmarsh and Wilkinson	
Co-opted Members:	Frank Smith	Peterborough Diocesan Board of Education
Also present:	Katt King Bryony Pound	Youth Council Representative Youth Council Representative
Officers in Attendance:	John Richards Mel Collins Elaine Fulton Maureen Phillips Debbie Brayshaw Stephen Sutherland Marie Southgate Elaine Lewis Paulina Ford Lindsay Tomlinson	Executive Director, Children's Services Assistant Director, Learning and Skills Assistant Director, Commissioning and Performance Assistant Director, Families and Communities Head of Children's Social Care Head of Strategy and Planning Lawyer Lawyer Performance Scrutiny and Research Officer Senior Governance Officer

1. Apologies

An apology had been received from Councillor Benton. Councillor C Burton attended as substitute.

2. Declarations

There were no declarations.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2009

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2009 were approved.

4. Integrated Children with Disabilities Service and Aiming High for Disabled Children

Integrating services for disabled children provided by health and the different divisions within children's services was part of the 'Every Child Matters' agenda to ensure that children and families received a co-ordinated assessment of need and appropriate services to meet those needs.

The aim of the project was to develop and implement an integrated service for children with disabilities across health, social care and education services by May 2009 and comprised the following key elements: -

- To integrate processes, policies and procedures
- To introduce a single assessment and referral process

- To provide improved service pathways
- To increase the amount of preventative services
- To create an accurate database of all children with a disability
- To develop joint planning processes
- To develop short break provision taking into account the Department for Children Schools and Families and Department of Health Aiming High implementation guidance
- To provide quality information to children and young people, parents and carers on all of the services available to them
- To ensure that children with disabilities were high on both operational and strategic agendas across children's services and organisations
- To increase the engagement and involvement of children and young people, their parents and carers

Eligibility for the Aiming High Short Breaks programme was targeted at those children and young people who were in receipt of higher level disability living allowance (DDA) and/or mobility allowance. Nationally this would equate to 1.2% of the 0-19 population; information from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) stated that 764 children and young people were in receipt of DDA in Peterborough and therefore this equated to 1.9% of the 0-19 population. Within the project there were 18 key deliverables which were all on target up to 31st December 2008. The complexity of budgets for disabled children within health had resulted in substantial delays in moving forward with pooled budgets and developing further integration plans. However, the project aims remained undiminished and every effort was being made to bring it back on track with the urgent appointment of an interim project manager who would be replaced by the permanent appointment of a service manager for the new service within 6 months.

There were three key elements to the proposals to deliver Aiming High, all of which were based on key information from consultation with parents and which would be presented to those parents attending the Parents' Forums during March 09 for further debate. The core offer involved publishing eligibility criteria and being transparent about how decisions were made to allocate services according to need. The full service offer involved expanding existing short break provision using Aiming High funding, and the guidance associated with allocation of the grant made it quite clear that both capital and revenue grants must be spent on developing a broader range of services with the aim of 'securing short breaks for severely disabled children'.

The focus of the commissioning strategy was therefore to build on existing services to expand on what was on offer, providing greater flexibility and choice and to bridge gaps in existing services identified by parents and carers.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- When will the staffing issues be resolved?
- We are due to interview next week and the intention is to have a small team responsible for the project rather than one person up until the time a new team leader is appointed.
- When will the correct data be available?
- We won't be happy with the data until we have an integrated case management system. We are currently improving processes to encourage registration and we are confident we will get close to an accurate picture.
- What is the life span of the project?
- The project is to put in place permanent management arrangements to make the service fully integrated.
- Do the authority and the PCT need to match fund the government funding?

- The authority is not providing any additional monies; the PCT is match funding.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the report.

5. The Annual Review of Peterborough's Children and Young People Plan

Peterborough's first statutory Children and Young People Plan (CYPP) had been published in April 2006. The three-year rolling plan had undergone two subsequent reviews and had been approved by the Children's Trust, Full Council and PCT Board in April of each year.

The overview document that outlined the vision and key priorities for children and young people in Peterborough was to be submitted for approval by Full Council in April 2009. An Annual Report, setting out progress against the 2008 CYPP, and a full Needs Assessment were due to be published in July 2009, to allow for the inclusion of end-of-year performance outturns.

The 2008 Children and Young People Plan had outlined the following vision:

"Our vision is simple: to create an environment where children and young people are safe and healthy, can enjoy what life has to offer and have ambition and aspirations, where they achieve their goals and make a positive contribution for themselves, their family and their community".

The 2008 CYPP outlined ten broad priorities, each of which had a number of key areas of focus. It was not proposed to change the ten priorities in the 2009 Children and Young People Plan. However, it was proposed that the key areas of focus be reviewed and updated to meet current needs. It was also proposed that there be an additional priority related to the key strategic enablers that needed to be put in place to deliver improved outcomes in Children's Services.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- How are you raising aspirations?
- The Children's Trust has 5 outcome partnerships, one of them being the "Enjoy and Achieve" Partnership which has been identified as a key focus. Any thoughts and ideas from members would be welcomed.
- How are you narrowing the achievement gap within the Pakistani community?
- We have a national programme around narrowing the gap. We have materials we use with schools and targeted programmes for groups in schools. We have seen improvement in the outcomes for children from the Pakistani community across all key stages. Information will be circulated to members. We have undertaken wider work through children's centres and extended schools – early intervention and support for families has been shown to be very effective.
- What support mechanisms are there for voluntary groups working during the evenings, for example after school clubs?
- We have a contract with the voluntary sector umbrella body for the delivery of services, training, CRB checks etc. Individual organisations went through a competitive tendering process to apply for funding to deliver specific areas of work, focussed on the CYPP priorities.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the report.

6. Post Haringey Review of Safeguarding – the Effectiveness of Safeguarding Arrangements in Peterborough

Following the publication of a Serious Case Review [SCR] in respect of Baby P in Haringey, a Joint Area Review [JAR] of safeguarding arrangements in that authority had been undertaken at the end of November 2008. Its findings had prompted the Secretary of State to request that all “ *Local Authorities, with their partners take stock of the effectiveness of safeguarding practices in their own areas*”.

The Panel received details of the action plan of Children’s Services to undertake an assessment of its arrangements against the findings and recommendations of the Haringey JAR. In addition Local Authorities had been requested to Review Serious Case Reviews judged inadequate by Ofsted.

Immediately post-Haringey, the position of Head of Social Care reporting into a larger Family and Communities division was reviewed. To give safeguarding and social care a higher profile with direct accountability to the Director, the Head of Social Care had been designated a full member of the Departmental Management Team. In addition, within the developing Children’s Trust Partnership Board (CTPB) structure, the Staying Safe Partnership Group would ensure leadership within the trust of the Staying Safe Action Plan and would strengthen links between the CTPB and the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board.

A review of safeguarding within social care had been conducted and one area for immediate action had been identified in relation to improving the quality of strategy meetings. Work was ongoing to improve the quality of assessments, developing a best practice model, and a new audit programme was being developed to reflect the issues discovered in Haringey and ensure the council remain compliant with the recommendations of the Climbié Inquiry of 2003.

The vacancy rate of qualified social workers within the authority was 12%. Reliance on agency staff had been reduced to a minimum. The additional work to review the two serious case reviews deemed inadequate had been completed and all necessary changes to procedures had already been implemented.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- This is a very complex issue. Members are often involved in individual cases and it can be difficult to get information – the problem of secrecy needs to be rectified.
- We hope there is no secrecy with the families concerned. We need to look at how we can best share information with members – it may be that information is withheld as it forms evidence. Officers will look at possible solutions; it may be that we can introduce a policy of telling members why information cannot be given.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel endorsed the report.

7. The Youth Crime Action Plan

The Youth Crime Action Plan, launched on 15th July 2008, was a cross-government initiative involving the Home Office, Ministry of Justice and Department for Children, Schools and Families. It aimed to get young people off the streets late at night, provide intensive support for the most problematic families and tougher, more visible ‘community payback’ sentences for young people who offend. At its heart, the plan was driven by the following three principles:-

- Enforcement and punishment
- Non-negotiable support
- Better and earlier prevention

The national Youth Crime Action Plan built on progress already made since the instigation of youth offending teams in 2000. The action plan highlighted a number of developments which had had a positive impact on youth crime reduction.

However, whilst the volume crime had gone down, the level of youth crime self-reported by young people remained static. There was understandable public concern about violence, use of weapons and gang related offending nationally. The plan identified the scope to improve local co-ordination and accountability and to focus on early intervention and prevention by focusing on the underlying causes of offending and the family circumstances associated with youth offending.

The key headlines relating to the reduction of youth crime nationally were as follows:

- Personal crime was down by 40% and violent crime down by 41% since 1995;
- Programmes such as 'Tackling Gangs Action Programme' had made real differences;
- There had been a significant investment in prevention, family support and the early years provision;
- Children's centres were increasingly targeting vulnerable families;
- Extended schools were offering a variety of co-located services for children, families and young people;
- There had been substantial investment in positive activities for young people at risk of offending and poor outcomes generally;
- The Youth Justice Board had developed a range of targeted intervention programmes

The Youth Crime Action plan analysed current progress in tackling youth crime and identified promising schemes piloted or implemented successfully in certain areas. Authorities granted YCAP money were required to implement services from a specified menu of projects and interventions designed to reduce youth crime. Peterborough was one of 69 local authorities qualifying for an YCAP grant of £790,000 over the following three years. Qualification was based on a needs analysis, around levels of social deprivation, disadvantage and offending levels.

After school 'sweeps' were taking place 3 times a week across Peterborough. Using uniformed police officers and police community safety officers, young people engaging in antisocial behaviour after school were picked up and returned to their parents. Early intervention of this nature had been found to prevent more serious problems occurring in the majority of cases.

Observations and questions were raised and discussed including:

- On what basis are schools chosen for after school police patrols?
- This is part of the safer schools initiative – it has proven so successful that all schools want to be involved. We will be introducing it into all areas.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the report.

8. Feedback and Update Report

The Panel received updates on the following:

- Recruitment and Retention in Schools
- Children's Trust – Overview of performance

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the report.

9. Executive Decision

The Panel considered the following Executive Decisions taken since the last meeting:

- Appointment of LEA Governor to Stanground St Johns Primary School
- Appointment of LEA Governor to Paston Ridings Primary School
- Appointment of LEA Governor to Matley Primary School
- Quality & Access for All Young Children- Three Year Allocation of Early Years Capital Grant
- Appointment of LEA Governor - Nene Valley Primary School
- Appointment of LEA Governor - Matley Primary School
- Appointment of LEA Governor - Dogsthorpe Infants School
- Appointment of LEA Governor - Eyrescroft Primary School

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the report.

10. Forward Plan of Key Decisions

The Panel received the latest version of the Council's Forward Plan, containing key decisions that the Leader of the Council anticipated the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members would make during the course of the following four months. Members were invited to comment on the Plan and, where appropriate, identify any relevant areas for inclusion in the Panel's work programme.

ACTION AGREED

The Panel noted the Forward Plan and agreed that a briefing note be circulated to members on the Peterborough Substance Misuse Treatment Plans.

The meeting began at 7pm and ended at 8.20pm

CHAIRMAN