

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
HELD ON MONDAY 3 JUNE 2013 FROM 7.00PM TO 9.07PM**

Present:- Pauline Helliard-Symons (Chairman), Ian Pittock (Vice-Chairman), Parry Bath, Andrew Bradley, Ken Miall, Sam Rahmouni, Bob Wyatt and Shahid Younis

*Also present:- Charlotte Haitham Taylor, Executive Member for Children's Services
Pauline Maddison, Interim Strategic Director of Children's Services
Martin Baker, Interim Head of Learning and Achievement*

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 25 February 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

2. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were submitted from Sam Rahmouni, Shahid Younis, and Colin Wood, Parent Governor Representative.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

5. MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

6. REPORT OF THE WOKINGHAM SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (WSCB)

The Committee received a copy of the Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board's Annual Report for 2011-2012, set out on Agenda pages 8 to 55. The report included the proposed Business Plan for 2012 – 2013.

In the absence of Stephen Barber, the Independent Chair, Pauline Maddison pointed out that things had moved on since that report was written. The report for 2012–13 was currently being prepared and a Business Plan for 2013–14 was being developed which will include the proposals to implement the recommendations of the Ofsted report on safeguarding. She suggested that it would be more suitable to postpone consideration of the WSCB Report until the September meeting when the more up-to date report should be available.

She mentioned that the Ofsted inspection concluded that children are safe in Wokingham but that there was room for improvement from all agencies around data collection and analysis.

RESOLVED: That the Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board's Annual Report for 2011-12 be noted and that the Annual Report for 2012-13, with Business Plan for 2013-2014 be considered at the Committee's meeting in September.

7. LISTENING TO THE CHILDREN'S VOICE - WBC CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S ENGAGEMENT SYSTEM & ENGAGEMENT & PARTICIPATION STRATEGY

The Committee received and considered a report set out on Agenda pages 56 to 67, which provided details of progress on the development of the Children and Young People's Engagement and Participation Strategy, and provided an update on how children and young people have been engaged to date in seeking their views on processes and provision.

Pauline Maddison explained that following the Ofsted Inspection of arrangements for the protection children in Wokingham Borough, recommendations were made for improvement in relation to 'listening to the children's voice' - engaging with children, young people and their families.

An Engagement Strategy is being developed to ensure that there are systems in place to make sure that all those involved with safeguarding and child protection are 'listening to the children's voice'. The report includes examples of how this is being done across all agencies, and Officers are confident that from the Ofsted point of view the deadline for the implementation of the recommendation has been met.

However the Strategy is being developed as an Engagement and Participation Strategy for use across all services in the Council, and in other agencies, and not just relating to safeguarding issues. The Council overall is not giving children and young people the opportunity to give their views on Council's plans and service changes. There is no evidence about how the Council talks to them and how their input is used. Pauline Maddison said that other authorities were way ahead of Wokingham in that respect. Young people are the future and have many ideas.

It is hoped that by September a model will be in place that sets out how sustainable engagement can be carried out by all services across the Council. This involves linking the Schools Councils to a Youth Forum/ Youth executive or Youth Parliament/MPs, which will be a talking network facilitated by the Youth Service. There should be consultation from services on any proposed specific changes and a commitment to give feedback on all ideas/suggestions. There should also be regular programmed contact with the Executive Member and Strategic Director. The Scrutiny Committee should have an involvement once a year to monitor the consultations and how the young people's feedback has been dealt with.

The Corporate Leadership Team has agreed in principle to this approach.

To assist in the development of the Strategy the Committee Members were asked for their input on the following issues which were discussed in turn:

How do we offer to engage with all young people and what should the model look like?

During the discussion the following suggestions were made:

- Need to ensure that we reach all young people, not just those from vulnerable groups or who are part of organised groups eg scouts guides etc;
- Young people are actively engaged in using social media, so we need to be more proactive in using social media, such as Facebook, which would grow once started;
- Have to empower the young people – could use websites designed by them to get the message across;

- About 50% of other authorities have a similar model to that suggested; some have a more important role for children and young people but are heavily funded;
- The aim is to get Council services to think about the impact that what they do or are planning to do, would have on children and young people – to get services to be ‘young people friendly’;
- It has to be embedded in the services that they should listen to the young people and give them feedback;
- If the Committee wanted to meet with the young people we should ask them how they want to do it;
- We could ask the children and young people what they want and what they would expect of the Council by electronic means, through schools and organised groups;
- There are some opportunities coming up to ask for their input – school meals contract, school transport and general travel opportunities;
- We could go into schools to introduce ideas/projects;
- Consultation could be done via schools’ own websites;
- Could write to all young people and ask what they think about Council services;

How do we ensure that a Youth Forum is representative of all young people and considers the views of vulnerable groups?

- There is a Youth Parliament, but it is not active; it is important that it is not dominated and focussed on subject matter suggested by the articulate/affluent members. It should include representation from vulnerable/disabled pupils;
- The Youth Forum should include representatives of all young people not just those groups listed in the report on page 58;
- Should include young people who live in more rural areas of the Borough as they have different needs;
- Chairs of Governors meet with their School Councils, contacting them could be a way of finding representatives.

How do we ensure engagement with and feedback from all Council services?

- Could include a ‘impact for children’ section on all reports, this would make Officers think about it when writing reports;
- Could include not just young people, but other vulnerable groups;
- All of the Corporate Leadership Team have agreed that the model will apply to all services when it is finalised;
- Should have an annual report to Scrutiny on how the model has been working including information on what engagement/consultations have been carried out with young people and what feedback has been given;

How might we celebrate the achievements of children and young people?

- Bracknell has an annual celebration event – Pride of Bracknell – which includes adults. Nominations are asked for in various categories, in conjunction with Radio Berkshire; all awards are sponsored;
- Musical events involving all schools;
- Award events are good for those who receive the awards but we need to widen them to include others; could have an open air event with bands in the evening;
- Invite young people to come to Council meeting;
- Issue certificates for achievements or use the website, set up a ‘Hall of Fame’ on Facebook;
- Encourage peer recognition, could do something as part of May Fayre

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The work to date by the Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board on listening to the voice of children and young people on safeguarding issues be noted;
- 2) the proposed approach in the Strategy to engaging with all children and young people across Council services, with the suggestions above be agreed;
- 3) a recommendation be made to Corporate Leadership Team that all Officer reports have a section which asks how the proposal will impact on children and other vulnerable groups;
- 4) once the Strategy is in place, an annual report giving a review of how young people have been engaged/consulted over the last year be presented to the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The report should include details of how often this has happened; what feedback was given and what impact it had on changing services.

8. SCHOOL PERFORMANCE AND OFSTED REPORTS

The Committee received and considered an updated list of Ofsted inspection outcomes for schools in the Borough and in adjoining authorities, on Agenda pages 68 to 70. It was noted that the inspection reports for the following schools had been published since the last meeting:

- Emmbrook Secondary – overall rating - 2 'good', previous rating 3 'satisfactory'
- Waingels College- overall rating 2 'good', previous rating 2 'good'
- Foundry College (PRU) – overall rating 2 'good', previous rating 2 'good'
- Beechwood Primary – overall rating 2 'good, previous rating 3 'satisfactory'
- Hatch Ride Primary – overall rating 2 'good', previous rating 3 'satisfactory'
- Hawthorns Primary – overall rating 2 'good', previous rating 1 'outstanding'
- Lambs Lane Primary – overall rating 3 'requiring improvement', previous rating 3 'satisfactory'
- South Lake Primary – overall rating 1 'outstanding', previous rating 2 'good'

The Committee noted that South Lake Primary School had improved and was now rated as outstanding.

In relation to Hawthorns Primary whose assessment had gone down from 'outstanding' to 'good', Martin Baker said that there were no concerns with the School, and the lower assessment was a reflection of the new Ofsted measures which focus on outcomes.

In relation to Lambs Lane Primary, which had been assessed as 'requiring improvement', Martin Baker said that the Local Authority was working with the School and the Governing Body, to support and challenge them in preparing the required Action Plan to address the issues for improvement identified in the inspection report.

9. CHILDREN'S SERVICES PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

The Committee received and considered the tables and commentary set out on Agenda pages 71 to 79, detailing the Children's Services Social Care Key Performance Indicators; data on NI 111 -Youth Offending Service – First Time Entrants; and data on NI – NEETS (Young people not in education employment or training) for the last year.

The Committee noted that the following indicators were red, but accepted the explanations given in the commentary:

- NI 59 – *Initial assessments for children’s social care that were carried out within 7 working days of referral*
- NI 60 – *Core assessments for children’s social care that were carried out within 35 days of their commencement*
- NI 61 – *Timeliness of placements of looked after children adopted following an agency decision that the child should be placed for adoption*
- NI 63 – *Stability of placements of looked after children: length of single placements over 2 years*
- NI 65 – *Percentage of children becoming the subject of a Child Protection Plan for a second or subsequent time*

Pauline Maddison indicated that most of the indicators reported in future would be changed.

In relation to the data for NI 111 – *First time entrants to Youth Justice*, it was noted that the nationally the figures for reoffending have reduced, and Wokingham is performing well against local and statistical neighbours.

In relation to the data for NI 117 – *Young People not in Employment, Education or Training (NEETs)* – it was noted that in comparison to the same period last year the percentage had decreased. Officers pointed out that the percentage of long term NEETs were significantly lower than other neighbouring authorities.

RESOLVED: That the Children’s Services Performance Indicators reports be noted.

10. FORWARD PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the Forward Programme of work as set out on Agenda pages 80 to 85, and following decisions made above agreed that the following amendments be made:

- Change the date of the September meeting from 4 to the 18 September
- Report of Wokingham Safeguarding Children Board now September meeting
- Children & Young People’s Plan Update on Implementation – move to March meeting
- Update on Listening to the Children’s Voice Strategy – September
- Update on SEN Review - September

These are the Minutes of a meeting of the Children’s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

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