

Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

Thursday 17 June 2010

PRESENT:

Councillor Wildy, in the Chair.

Councillor Mrs Stephens, Vice Chair.

Councillors Mrs Beer, Delbridge, Mrs Foster, Haydon, Roberts, Tuohy and Wildy.

Co-opted Representatives: Mr Kevin Willis

Apologies for absence: Councillor Stark and Mrs Maggie Gee

Also in attendance: Giles Perritt, Lead Officer, Viv Gillespie, Chair of the Wise LSP Theme Group, Bronwen Lacey, Director of Services for Children and Young People, Mairead McNeil, Assistant Director for Children's Social Care, Maggie Carter, Assistant Director for Learner and Family Support, Colin Moore, Assistant Director for Lifelong Learning, Claire Cordory, Assistant Director for Commissioning, Policy and Performance (covering)

The meeting started at 10.00 am and finished at 12.05 pm.

Note: At a future meeting, the committee will consider the accuracy of these draft minutes, so they may be subject to change. Please check the minutes of that meeting to confirm whether these minutes have been amended.

1. **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR**

Agreed that Councillor Wildy is appointed the Chair of the panel for the forthcoming municipal year 2010/11 and Councillor Mrs Stephens is appointed the Vice Chair of the panel for the forthcoming municipal year 2010/11.

2. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. **MINUTES**

Agreed that the minutes of the meeting held on 8 April 2010 were confirmed as a correct record.

4. **CHAIR'S URGENT BUSINESS**

The Chair altered the order of items on the agenda; agenda item 8 was moved forward to report on the situation regarding young co-optees. A letter of thanks had been sent to Jake Paget and Kate Taylor.

5. **APPOINTMENT OF CO-OPTED REPRESENTATIVES**

The Chair suggested that it would be good to have a wider pool of young people as co-opted representatives on the Panel. It was reported that –

- (i) with the permission of the panel, the Chair would ask Sarah Heffernan, Senior Youth Support Worker and Karl Sweeney, Adviser for Citizenship, PSHEE & Healthy Schools to come back with recommendations on how to best engage with young people for co-option onto the Panel;
- (ii) Kate Taylor and Jake Paget had made an valued contribution to the Panel, from the point in which they were involved in the mosquito project;
- (iii) this would be a positive thing for scrutiny and would hopefully encourage a few more young people to come forward and represent the views of young people on the Panel.

Agreed that –

- 1. Sarah Heffernan, Senior Youth Support Worker and Karl Sweeney, Adviser for Citizenship, PSHEE & Healthy Schools be tasked to look at ways of involving young people in the work of the committee;
- 2. Kate Taylor and Jake Paget to receive a formal recognition of their work on the Panel.

(the order of the agenda was changed and this item was brought forward.)

6. **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

Giles Perritt, Lead Officer updated the panel on the terms of reference. It was reported that –

- (i) the terms of reference were out of date and needed to be changed to embrace the clarity and trust between the Panel and various other organisations;
- (ii) the Panel needed to be mindful of any conflict with regard to co-opted representatives that the Panel may need to scrutinise.

Agreed that –

- (1) the Democratic Support Officer and Lead Officer produce a pool of people the Panel can draw on to help the Panel with the scrutiny of the work programme;
- (2) the Lead Officer will review the terms of reference in light of other governance changes within the city.

7. **TRACKING RESOLUTIONS AND FEEDBACK FROM THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD**

The Panel's Tracking Resolutions were noted.

8. **JOINT FINANCE AND PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT**

The Chair welcomed Councillor Mrs Watkins, the new Cabinet member for Children and Young People to the meeting and gave thanks to Councillor Monahan for his contribution to the Panel over the last year. Councillor Mrs Watkins listed the priorities for the forthcoming year. It was reported that –

- (i) safeguarding children was a priority;
- (ii) Councillor Mrs Watkins had attended many children service's meetings and workshops and was very clear on her role; she was looking at changing and improving services further;
- (iii) the budget would be extremely difficult over the coming years;
- (iv) the Ofsted report identified problems with record keeping, supervision, caseloads and the recruitment and selection of social workers. The Cabinet member would be working with the relevant officers and would closely monitor the action plan.

In response to questions, it was reported that -

- (v) in relation to the underspend in Lifelong Learning and whether this would affect the delivery of service, all spend was being monitored in an attempt to balance the budget;
- (vi) in relation to the Schools Forum, if a school balance went into an overspend then we would need to scrutinise. We have a responsibility to help the each school get in balance over a three year period and there are strict rules in carrying over a deficit;
- (vii) in relation to Post 16, this was a topic that the Panel would consider scrutinising to look at the impact of the raising of school leaving age.

Agreed that eperform and financial training will be provided to the Panel to help them to understand the joint finance and performance reports.

9. **OVERVIEW OF PRIORITIES OF SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

Bronwen Lacey, Director of Services for Children and Young People gave an overview of the priorities for children and young people. It was reported that –

- (i) there were 10 priorities in the Children's Plan with a named person that champions each priority;
- (ii) the Panel needed to ensure that the right priorities emerge in the Children's Plan for 2011;
- (iii) four years ago, Plymouth City Council was one of the worst local authorities for Children Services, now it was one of the best;
- (iv) the number of young people not in education, employment or training (NEETS) was reducing, but would be reviewed in the autumn to ensure risks were identified;
- (v) health inequalities was a priority as well as narrowing the gap;
- (vi) locality working would be at the heart of the department's approach to services for children and young people;
- (vii) Assistant Directors would be available to support the work of the Panel.

10. **UPDATES FROM PARTNER ORGANISATIONS**

Viv Gillespie, Chair of the LSP Wise Theme Group, update the Panel on the work of the Wise Theme Group. It was reported that –

- (i) she recently undertook the role of Chair of the LSP Wise Theme Group;
- (ii) she aimed to avoid duplication between the Wise and Wealthy Theme Group, Viv was also a member of the Wealthy Theme Group;
- (iii) raising aspiration continued to be an issue for the city;
- (iv) the group was keen to work on the skills to keep young people employed and how this was built into schools, colleges and universities;
- (v) the group were looking cross at city projects that would engage with all partners;

- (vi) the work of the LSP Wise Theme Group needs to tie up with the terms of reference of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel to ensure that there is no duplication. The LSP Wise Theme Group welcomed Panel feedback.

11. **FUTURE DATES AND TIMES OF MEETINGS**

Agreed that the next meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel be held on 15 July 2010 at 10.30 am at Lipson Community College following a visit to Riverside School.

12. **WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11**

The Panel considered its work programme for 2010/11.

Agreed that –

- (1) the Panel delegate authority to the Lead Officer in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair to review the work programme in further detail;
- (2) a briefing note is provided to the Panel on Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) provision in all schools and how the Panel could address this issue;
- (3) a folder of information relating to children's services is given to each panel member;
- (4) a workshop on children's services is to be organised for Panel members.

13. **EXEMPT BUSINESS**

There were no items of exempt business.