

ITEM 4

Time commenced - 6.00pm

Time finished - 7.24pm

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE COMMISSION 16 MARCH 2010

Present: Councillor Bolton (Chair)
Councillors Ginns, Higginbottom, F Khan and Williams
John Honey and Ian Jenison

54/09 Apologies

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R Khan.

55/09 Late Items

There were no late items.

56/09 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

57/09 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 January 2010 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

58/09 Call-in

There were no items.

Items for Discussion

59/09 Dyslexia and the role of Educational Psychologists and other professionals

The Commission received a report on the role of the Educational Psychologists and the current situation regarding the assessment and support of pupils with dyslexia. It was reported that the service makes a major contribution to interventions through the provision of training in the Learn to Read, Learn to Spell, Funnix programmes and Precision teaching. All of which were well founded interventions as defined by Sir Jim Rose.

It was reported that best practice involved an assessment over time to determine how the child responds to well founded interventions rather than

one off assessments that do not monitor the pupil's progress over time. It was noted that the child would normally take part in interventions over a period of two school terms.

Members noted that there would be a level of parental distress as reading is thought of as the key to success in school. It was reported that schools act as quickly as viable on any issues, although some parents do have private tests carried out which would probably have little impact on teaching at the school. Some parents felt the need for their child to be labelled, although there is no evidence that this necessarily improves the child's progress. Any information from parents would be passed on directly to the Educational Physiologist.

It was reported that a review was to be carried out on the policy in the autumn this year and further details would be provided to the Commission.

Resolved to note the report.

60/09 World Class Primary Schools Programme

The Commission received a report on the world class primary schools programme. It was reported that following the national decline in Key Stage 2 SAT's in 2009 the Secretary of State for Children, Schools and Families announced a programme aimed to improve standards in all primary schools in England. Under the requirements of the programme all schools were to produce a plan to raising key stage 2 attainment by the end of March. It was noted that since the plans had been submitted, the Council had received good national feedback, although there was some criticism from the DCSF of which the full details were to be provided. Members noted that DCSF had offered to provide an advisor, at no cost, to help the authority to deliver the plan providing support and advice.

Members noted that the announcement of the programme had introduced floor target requiring 55% of pupils to attain level 4 in both English and maths in their SAT's, for which nationally results had showed a drop.

Concern was expressed by the Commission that many schools affected were in disadvantaged and vulnerable areas of the City and so already suffering with recruitment and retention issues.

It was noted by Members that there were many children in schools whose first language was not English which could cause issues for them passing English reading tests. It was reported that there were additional support workers to help new families arriving to Derby, which was about 300 per year. The support workers would support the families for a six week period before the children went to school, which was now in blocks rather than individually each week. The Commission applauded staff who worked in the schools striving to maintain a balanced curriculum to children who don't always learn as quickly as everyone would like.

The Chair requested that an update be provided at a future meeting of the Commission.

Resolved to note the report.

61/09 Children's Trust Board

The Commission received a report on the Children's Trust arrangements. Members were provided with a brief history of the arrangements from 2002 to date. It was noted that the Trust was a statutory body with responsibility for developing the Children and Young People's Plan, which would be the joint strategy of the partners in the Children's Trust on how they co-operate to improve children's well being. The Trust was the sum total of co-operation arrangements and partnerships between organisations from governance to front-line delivery. It was reported that every local area was required to have a Trust from April 2010.

Members raised concerns that previously the Executive function had fallen with the Cabinet Member and the Local Authority and now this would change to the Trust Board. It was noted that a report had been through the Council Cabinet process and where the delivery was though the Council's services it would be adopted. There would be guidance on the Trust Board and how it should operate and it looked unlikely that the Executive function would shift.

The Chair requested an update be provided at a future meeting of the Commission.

Resolved to note the report.

62/09 Annual Children and Young People's Social Care Services Complaints 2008/09

The Commission received a report on the children and young people's social care services complaints. The complaints and compliments from service users provided information to organisations to help them deliver effective services. An annual report was submitted to Ofsted on the procedure and performance of complaints.

Members noted that there had been an increased level of activity within the services to over 4,000 in 2008/09.

It was reported that it was positive that more young people were empowered to make complaints about services they were dissatisfied with themselves.

The Commission agreed that whilst dealing with such emotional situations, users would complain because it is in their nature to do so. It was thought the awareness campaign had been useful and that it was a good method to use to enhance the service. Members congratulated Social workers on the work they did whilst under such immense pressure.

Resolved to note the report.

63/09 Update on Gangs Review

The Commission were informed that the review had been completed of which the findings would be shared with key officers at the end of the week. The report would then be circulated to Commission members in due course. It was noted that the additional investment from the Children and Young People's Department was welcomed. The additional staff member would build in partnership with the multi agency gang team on the delivery of the gangs programme to Derby Schools.

The Chair requested that a further update be provided to the Commission on the eight recommendations from the Commission's report.

The Commission noted Andrew Flack's retirement and placed their thanks to him on record, it was agreed that he had always shown professionalism and enthusiasm in his position.

Resolved to note the update.

64/09 Retrospective Scrutiny

There were no items identified.

65/09 Forward Plan

There were no items identified.

66/09 Responses to any reports and enquiries of the Commission

There were no items.

67/09 Matters referred to the Commission by Council Cabinet

There were no items.

68/09 Member Satisfaction Survey

Members received the survey from the Council's Overview and Scrutiny section, they were reminded to complete the survey and return it to the Overview and Scrutiny Officer.

MINUTES END