

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES)

MEETING HELD AT THE BOOTLE  
ON THURSDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2010



PRESENT: Councillor Hands (in the Chair)

Councillors Bradshaw, Cummins, Cuthbertson,  
Dodd, Hough, McGuire and Mrs. S. Cain (Parent  
Governor Representative)

**53. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Byrne, Byrom, Booth (Substitute Member), Gibson, Glover (Substitute Member), Kerrigan (Substitute Member) and T. Jones and Father D. Seddon (Archdiocesan Representative).

**54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

The following declarations of interest were received:-

Member	Item	Reason	Action
Councillor Cummins	Minutes No'd. 58 & 60	Personal – by virtue of his position of Chair of Governors at Rimrose School; and Personal – by virtue of his position working with Sefton Carers.	Took part in consideration of the item and voted thereon;
Councillor Cuthbertson	Minutes No'd. 58 & 60	Personal – by virtue of her appointment on the Board of Enterprises Savio Salesian College; and Personal – by virtue of friendship.	Took part in consideration of the item and voted thereon;

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES) -  
THURSDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2010

Member	Item	Reason	Action
Councillor Hands	Minutes No'd. 61	Personal – by virtue of his Daughters employment as a Youth Worker for YMCA.	Took part in consideration of the item and voted thereon.

**55. MINUTES**

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2009 be confirmed as a correct record subject to the following amendments:-

Minute No 46, Declarations of Interest:

1. that Councillor Cuthbertson replace Councillor Hands as declaring a personal interest in relation to Minute No. 50 and not 49 – by virtue of her appointment on the Board of Enterprises Savio Salesian College; and
2. that Councillor Byrne Declared an Interest in relation to Minute No 50 and not 49.

**56. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC HEALTH**

RESOLVED: That the report be withdrawn from the Agenda due to non-attendance by the consultant in Public Health.

**57. FOSTERING SERVICE WORKING GROUP - UPDATE REPORT**

Further to Minute No. 49 of 20 October 2009, the Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Children Schools and Families advising Members of the financial implications of the recommendations contained in the Fostering Service Working Group Report April 2009 as follows:-

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES) -  
THURSDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2010

<b>Rec. No.</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Estimated Annual Cost</b>
		£
1	Foster Carers' weekly payment increased by 30% immediately over standard inflation rate	580,000
2	Foster Carers paid a retention fee of £50/week for a maximum 12 weeks when they are without a placement	28,600
4	Respite care for Foster Carers	75,000
5	LA enters into preferential partnership agreement with suitable provider	-
6	Advocacy Service for Foster Carers	8,900
7	3 Trainee Social Worker Posts be created, per year	164,000
13	Increased salaries of Social Workers	107,400
14	Decreasing caseloads for Social Workers	433,500
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>1,397,400</b>

The Chair, Councillor Richard Hands, welcomed Foster Carers to the meeting and requested them to raise their hand if they wished to pass comment or ask questions.

The Strategic Director of Children's Schools and Families reported that he welcomed the report and reassured Members and Foster Carers that it was his intention along with the Children's Social Care Director to work closely with the Foster Carer Support Groups and Members to ensure that the service was shaped by the Foster Carers themselves. He went through each of the recommendations and in summary gave the following reassurances:-

- That although the increase by 30% over standard inflation rate to Foster Carers' weekly payment could not be incorporated into the budget process for 2010/11, it be an aspiration to work towards and investigated further should savings be made in future through early intervention and prevention.
- That an insurance scheme did exist for each Foster Carer.
- That Respite Care for Foster Carers be investigated further, including the issue of Foster Carers losing payment whilst respite was being undertaken.
- That the recommendation in relation to entering into a preferential partnership agreement be developed further looking at individual packages.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES) -  
THURSDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2010

- That the budget headings within the overall budget had been re-configured making them easier to understand.
- That the Handbook should be ready to be sent to Foster Carers during February 2010.
- That the protocol in relation to coordinating adaptations for Foster Carers' Homes had been referred to the Foster Carer support Groups.
- That there had been 3 Foster Carer Support Groups set up.
- The Increase of Social Worker salaries were subject to the Pay and Grading Review.
- That a strategy be looked at to reduce the number of out of borough placements, which would reduce case load work.
- That the introduction of a marketing strategy and Foster Carer recruitment and retention Strategy be referred to the Corporate Parenting Board and the Foster Carer Support Groups.
- That an advocacy service be provided with immediate effect.
- That the recommendation in relation to Trainee Social Worker posts being created had been successfully pursued through "Step up to Social Work".

RESOLVED: That:-

- (1) the financial implications of the Fostering Service Working Group be accepted and referred to the Cabinet, Cabinet Member - Children' Services and the Transformation Team for consideration during the budget process; and
- (2) a report updating Members on the Action Plan arising from last year's Inspection of the Councils Fostering Service be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee.

**58. REVENUE AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE MONITORING TO 30  
SEPTEMBER 2009**

Further to Minute No. 95 of the meeting of the Cabinet Member – Children's Services held on 17 November 2009, the Committee considered the joint report of the Environmental Protection Director and the Finance and Information Services Director on the quarterly forecast position, based on information as at 30 September 2009, in relation to the Portfolio's 2009/10 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme; and indicating that a decision on this matter was required in accordance with the corporate performance management framework.

Annex A to the report detailed the Portfolio's budgets that were monitored and reported on the risk-assessed basis; whilst Annex B detailed the Portfolio's schemes within the Capital Programme 2009/10 - 2012/13.

The report concluded by requesting whether any comments about the overall performance of the Revenue Budget or Capital Programme schemes should be referred to the Cabinet.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and no comments be made at present to the Cabinet regarding the overall performance of the revenue budget and the schemes within the capital programme.

#### **59. BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE**

Further to Minute No. 50 of 27 October 2009, the Committee received a verbal update from the Strategic Director of Children's Services on progress with respect to the Council's Building Schools for the Future programme which had received approval in November 2009.

RESOLVED:

That the update on progress be received and a further report be submitted to the next meeting of this Committee detailing the project plan and financial implications of the scheme.

#### **60. ANNUAL REPORT ON COMPLAINTS FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services giving details of the number nature and outcomes of complaints made to Sefton Children's Services.

The report had been considered by the Cabinet Member - Children's Services on 17 November 2009 (Minute No. 94 refers) and had been referred to this Committee for consideration.

Members congratulated Ms Lynn Wallis, Children's Complaints Officer, for the excellent report and work conducted by herself and her team.

RESOLVED:

That the report informing of the number nature and outcomes of complaints made to Sefton Children's Services be received.

#### **61. YOUTH SERVICE DATABASE**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director Children's Services giving an overview of the database used by the Youth Service to monitor the Youth Work and Positive Activities funded via the Youth Service.

The Electronic Management Information System (EYS) had been introduced 12 months previously to improve the access to and quality of recorded data. The electronic system would ensure consistent recordings, easier monitoring and sharing of good practice.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (CHILDREN'S SERVICES) -  
THURSDAY 21ST JANUARY, 2010

Members raised concerns, following a visit to Formby Youth Centre, in relation to a 35 hour per week Youth Worker post which had not been appointed to, more specifically Members were concerned about the work load of the existing Youth Worker at that base. The Chair, Councillor Richard Hands, requested the Strategic Director Children Schools and Families to write to himself, Councillor Cuthbertson and Councillor Cummins confirming the position.

The Chair also raised the issue that he had been made aware that Management Committees existed in the North of the Borough only, and he requested that they be re-instated in the South and Mid Areas.

RESOLVED: That:-

- (1) the report be received;
- (2) the Strategic Director of Children's Services be requested to write to Councillors Cummins, Cuthbertson and Hands confirming the position of the 35 hour per week Youth Worker vacancy for Formby Youth Centre; and
- (3) Management Committees for the Mid and South Areas of the Borough be re-instated.

**62. ANNUAL UNANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF CONTACT,  
REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT ARRANGEMENTS WITHIN  
SEFTON COUNCIL'S CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

The Committee considered the report of the Strategic Director of Children's Services giving an update on the annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment services which was held on 22 and 23 September 2009, together with a copy of the letter from Ofsted outlining the finding following the inspection.

The report had been considered by the Cabinet Member - Children's Services on 27 October 2009 (Minute No. 88 refers) and had been referred to this Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report updating on the annual unannounced inspection of contact, referral and assessment services be noted; and
- (2) the letter from Ofsted outlining the findings following the inspection be received.

**63. CABINET MEMBER REPORT - CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, it had been agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board to submit relevant Cabinet Member Reports to Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Accordingly, the Committee received the latest report from the Cabinet Member - Children's Services.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member report be received.

**64. WORK PROGRAMME KEY DECISION FORWARD PLANS - 1  
DECEMBER 2009 TO 31 MARCH 2010 AND 1 JANUARY TO 30  
APRIL 2010**

The Committee considered the report of the Legal Director which detailed the Committee's programme of work including the Key Decision Forward Plans containing all the Key Decisions which the Executive would take during the period 1 December 2009 to 31 March 2010 and 1 January to 30 April 2010. The Committee was advised of its right to pre-scrutinise any Key Decision which fell under its remit. The Committee also considered the latest Key Decision Forward Plan for period 1 February to 31 May 2010 which was circulated at the meeting. It was reported that the plan for that period had been published after the agenda for this meeting had been distributed.

Councillor Cummins informed Members that the Corporate Parenting Working Group had met prior to the Overview and Scrutiny Meeting and reviewed its Scoping Document. He stated that the Working Group were in a position to draft its Final Report.

The Chair, Councillor Hands reported that the Youth Centre visits had been a success and that he was keen to organise more in the future.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Key Decision Forward Plans for the periods 1 December 2009 to 31 March 2010, 1 January to 30 April 2010 and 1 February to 31 May 2010 be accepted;
- (2) progress of the Corporate Parenting Working Group be supported;  
and
- (3) progress of the Focus Group set up to carry out a short piece of work in relation to the Youth Service be supported.