

## Lancashire County Council

**Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee**  
**Tuesday 28 August 2007 at 10.00am at Lancashire College, Chorley**

### Minutes

#### Present:-

County Councillor Mrs P Case CBE (Chair)

#### County Councillors

M Calvert*	M Livesey
Mrs S Charles	M Martin
Mrs S Derwent	M Parkinson
C Grunshaw	N Penney
Mrs J Hanson	S Serridge
F Heyworth	S Shorrock

F Williams

\* County Councillor M Calvert attended the meeting in place of County Councillor T Ashton

#### Co-opted Members

##### Representing Faith Schools (voting)

Mrs J Dowson	Mrs D Durham
Mr M Flynn	

#### Non-Voting

K Cridland	- National Union of Teachers
Mr R Ford	- Lancashire Association of School Governing Bodies
Mrs L Laverty	- Association of School and College Leaders
Mrs P J Thomas	- Association of Teachers and Lecturers

Apologies for absence had been received from County Councillors N Ahmed, T Ashton, W Dwyer and H Gore, and from Mr N Anwar (Lancashire Council of Mosques).

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Mrs Pat Jefferson, Executive Director for Children and Young People, Mr David Ledsham, Performance Development Manager, Directorate for Children and Young People, Councillor Graeme Cocker and Michael Ryan (Wyre Borough Council) and Councillor Mark Perks and Jamie Carson (Chorley Borough Council). Councillors Julie Buttle (Preston City Council) and Brian Essex, (Rossendale Borough Council) were also in attendance.

#### Disclosure of Personal and Prejudicial Interests

None disclosed

## **Confirmation of Minutes**

**10. Resolved:** - That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 June 2007 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

## **Membership of the Committee**

It was reported for the information of the Committee that, since the last ordinary meeting of the Committee in June 2007, Mr Peter Martin had resigned as a co-opted non-voting member of the Committee and that Mrs Elizabeth Lafferty had been nominated by the Lancashire Branch of the Association of School and College Leaders to take the place of Mr ~Peter Martin with effect from the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2007.

The Committee was also informed that Mrs Patricia Thomas would also be resigning as a co-opted non-voting member of the Committee at the end of August 2007, and that Mr Carvel Lonsdale had been nominated by the Lancashire branch County Joint Secretary for the Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL) to take Mrs Thomas' place with effect from 1 September 2007.

The Chair thanked Mrs Thomas on behalf of the Committee for her contribution to the work of the Committee since her appointment in June 2006.

**11. Resolved:** - That the appointment of Mrs Liz Laverty and Mr Carvel Lonsdale as co-opted non-voting members of the Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee with effect from 1 July and 1 September 2007, respectively, be noted and that the Committee places on record its thanks to Mrs Patricia Thomas for her contribution to the work of the Committee since June 2006.

## **A Scrutiny of How Partnership Working between Lancashire County Council and District Councils is Delivering Improved Outcomes for Children and Young People**

This item, the main business of the meeting, involved a scrutiny exercise by the Committee on how the County Council and the Lancashire District Councils were working in partnership to deliver the five outcomes of the Every Child Matters (ECM) Agenda, in particular those relating to the Children's Block of the Lancashire Local Area Agreement (LAA). In introducing the scrutiny exercise, the Chair of the Committee drew Members' attention to the papers that had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting, which provided the evidence and context for the presentations to be made from the representatives of the County and District Councils. Briefly, the papers comprised: -

- A brief description of the Children's Block of the Lancashire LAA (Appendix 'A').
- The Audit Commission Report "Working in Partnership to Deliver Improved Outcomes for Children and Young People". (Appendix 'B'), providing an independent evaluation, as of February 2007, on progress made in

developing partnership working. It highlighted a number of strengths and weaknesses and was the main driver of this scrutiny exercise.

- A background report presented by the Directorate for Children and Young People to the Lancashire Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership in March 2007 (Appendix 'C') and which summarised the conclusions of the Audit Commission report and set them alongside outputs from work previously undertaken with the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) and Greengage Consultancy.
- An agreed County and District Action Plan (Appendix 'D') for developing and improving partnership working arising from the recommendations of the Audit Commission's report at Appendix 'B'.

A copy of the report presented to the Committee, together with the papers referred to above, can be viewed on the County Council's website at:-

<http://www3.lancashire.gov.uk/council/meetings/displayAgendas.asp?meetid=5082>

Pat Jefferson led the County Council's presentation on the Authority's response to Every Child Matters Agenda, a reform agenda to bring about a transformation in services provided for children and young people. Mrs Jefferson highlighted the County Council's role and responsibilities as a Children's Services Authority. She emphasised the requirement for a significant impact through partnership working and inter agency co-operation, including education, social care, health provision, and indicated that there would be a much sharper focus on earlier intervention and prevention for children most at risk. The importance of the overview and scrutiny role in undertaking public scrutiny of 'change for children' as it developed was also highlighted.

Mrs Jefferson outlined the governance arrangements for partnership working and the shared priorities, particularly in terms of work ongoing with district councils on issues within the Children and Young People's Plan, the Children and Young People's block of the Lancashire Local Area Agreement (LAA) and the children and young people thematic groups of the Local Strategic Partnerships.

In terms of achievements to date, partners were on target to meet government milestones and feedback from regulators had been consistently positive. Locality Safeguarding Groups had been established, some of which included representation from families and carers, and local impact was being achieved through various programmes and initiatives.

Focusing on partnership activity with district councils, Mrs Jefferson drew the Committee's attention to activities that had resulted from the Audit Commission's report of February 2007 and the work undertaken in conjunction with IDeA and Greengage Consultancy, including the establishment of a District ECM Leads Group, an action plan to address recommendations, self assessment and a shared programme and an initial focus on safeguarding and governance.

Future challenges for partners included the roll out of Children's Trust Arrangements, the Common Assessment Framework (CAF), development of ContactPoint – a single child record, and the development of a Children's Services Directory for access by families and carers, which would form the major

piece of work with the district councils over the next year. District councils would also have a stronger role in strategic and local targeting of priorities based on evidence of need, looking to provide better outcomes for all children. A further challenge was to seek to achieve a stronger “voice” for children and young people, in particular how to harness the voice of the most vulnerable children. There was also still much more to be done in providing support for families and carers. Finally, Mrs Jefferson drew the Committee’s attention to the Joint Area Review that was to take place in May 2008. Partners were working together to assess input into the review, which would identify whether families and children in Lancashire were receiving the services and support that they needed.

Michael Ryan, Officer Lead for Every Child Matters (ECM) at Wyre Borough Council, accompanied by Councillor Graeme Cocker, the Borough Council’s Portfolio Holder for Living Safely, presented their perspective on partnership working on children and young people issues in Wyre. He highlighted the Council’s priorities as teenage conception rates, access to child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), education attainment adapted to key stages 1 and 2, young people not in education, employment, training (NEET) and the proportion of under-16’s looked after.

Mr Ryan outlined the leadership and governance arrangements for ECM in Wyre. A Wyre Children’s Trust, including a thematic group, had been established and Mr Ryan explained ongoing activities taking place in that respect. The Borough Council fully understood its role and responsibilities with regard to children and young people, although there remained the challenge of driving through the necessary change of culture within the authority and providing effective training to ensure that all staff were properly equipped to fulfil their new duties. He also identified other challenges facing the Trust as consortia arrangements, development of the Common Assessment Framework, involving young people and parents, and safeguarding. Examples of good practice and learning included initiatives such as the Coastal Child and Adolescent Therapeutic Services (CCATS), Young People as Victims of Crime in Wyre, Summer Sports/Arts Programmes, a Youth Council DVD and facilities for Young People in Wyre. The Committee was informed that the Safer and Stronger Communities block of the LAA Annual Progress Report contained a case study from Wyre, which had been developed with young people at risk over a period of three months.

Councillor Mark Perks, Chorley Borough Council’s ECM Member Champion and Executive Member for Health, Leisure and Well Being, introduced Jamie Carson, the Borough Council’s Director for Cultural Services, who presented Chorley’s approach to ECM and the LAA. Mr Carson explained that ECM was a key priority in the Council’s Corporate Strategy and the Borough Community Strategy, and outlined the governance arrangements and some of the activities that had already taken place, including the development of an ECM ‘Action Plan’ and a targeted intervention bid under the LAA.

The Borough Council was taking forward ECM through its Strategic base and leads, the Local Strategic Partnership’s Children and Young People Thematic Group projects and other projects, e.g. vulnerable families’ and alcohol projects. Mr Carson confirmed that the broad range of partners was engaged. Other

vehicles for taking forward ECM included Children's Trust Arrangements, Enhanced Two Tier working and involving and engaging children and young people. Clustering arrangements, e.g. on safeguarding, were in place and they included participation of representatives from South Ribble and West Lancashire. The arrangements had presented challenges in terms of cascading information and knowledge/information management.

Mr Carson suggested that a particular challenge that overview and scrutiny might consider, in terms of shared priorities and understanding, was issues around the allocation of resources where there were conflicting priorities/tensions between county and districts. He cited the example of priorities in respect of teenage conception rates in Chorley, where the district had identified current trends as more of a concern and priority for them than perhaps the County Council, who had responsibility for looking at rates across the county. Other challenges and opportunities for Chorley were those already identified for the County Council and Wyre. Good practice and learning activities in Chorley included the Borough Council's 'Get up and go' free activities for young people, an Audit Commission Management letter, which had identified the Council's work around ECM as a strength, and a number of initiatives engaging and involving young people.

At the conclusion of the presentations, the presenters and District Council Members formed a panel to answer questions as appropriate and engage in substantive discussion. In inviting questions and input from members of the Committee, the Chair drew attention to a number of issues which had been highlighted in the Audit Commission's report of February 2007 and had been identified for the Committee to explore in the ensuing discussion. A considerable number of issues were raised during the discussion, as follows: -

- More opportunities could be taken to work outside government targets to create pilot projects (e.g. to support children who were victims of domestic violence) if funding could be combined into one central pot. Partners needed to adopt a modern approach to developing services, taking opportunities to develop activities and to seek the 'voice' of young people, particularly in disadvantaged areas, to discover the kind of facilities they wanted. Partners should be encouraged to look for funding from all possible sources.
- There was considerable concern about inequality of support at district level for victims of domestic violence. District councils had a statutory duty to re-house victims of domestic violence, particularly if children were involved, but in some districts there was no housing provision or refuge accommodation. District Councils in partnership with the Police, health and social services could help to provide the necessary support.
- County Councillor Penney, a member of the Lancashire Police Authority with special responsibility for domestic violence and child protection, emphasised the need for early intervention/preventative work in circumstances of domestic violence and highlighted the services provided at SAL'S (Safe at Last) Place in Lancaster. The Chair suggested that Councillor Penney might wish to take the opportunity to visit District ECM theme groups to explore the issues further with them. Pat Jefferson informed the Committee that the District ECM Leads Group had renewed its commitment to fund some preventative

work and to ensure that the value of any preventative work that had already been done well would not be lost.

- The Chorley Borough Council representatives confirmed that the 'Get Up and Go' Programme had proved successful. In order to ensure that those children who needed the activities most were targeted, the Council had put measures in place to identify how many children and young people had gone through the programme and the areas they came from. There were some challenges around encouraging 14-17 year olds to keep up the programme. Wyre Borough Council reported that they also actively targeted certain children and young people they identified as needing access to these activities most and that they had in place contact arrangements so they could provide transport for these to their programme of activities where necessary.
- The most effective way of involving children and young people in committees and other such organised activities was to try to familiarise with existing young people's groups, e.g. the Youth Council, school councils etc. A number of Primary School Councils had agreed to become associate members of Children and Young People's Local Strategic Partnerships (CYP LSPs), but met within the school setting. Members of the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership would attend some meetings of the school council to hear the views of the children. Rossendale Borough Council was increasing the involvement of young people in local authority functions through its Youth Council and schools' councils within the Borough as part of its democratic offer.
- The Committee was given an assurance that relationships were being established with children in short stay schools (also known as Pupil Referral Units) who were being given the same opportunities as other schools for engagement on issues affecting children and young people
- There were a lot of factors affecting children's lives/education which were not specifically within local authority areas of control. Some children were now experiencing similar socio/economic difficulties that their parents had experienced in the past. The question was raised as to how far the Children and Young People's Partnerships could influence or intervene in the lives of children outside school/local authority service provision and what measurable difference the partnerships could make to children's lives. Pat Jefferson referred to the correlation between education and economic prosperity and indicated that the most important issue was to raise the achievements and expectations of children themselves as future citizens of Lancashire
- The issue was raised of a link between education and apprenticeships in industry/business for young people. Pat Jefferson explained that there were many opportunities available, but quality of experience was an important factor. The County Council was exploring the concept of "Young People in the Workplace", but as a major employer, it could be much more proactive in offering workplace opportunities to young people and could approach District Strategic Partnerships to seek to develop such opportunities. In Wyre, a significant number of apprenticeships for young people had been secured in the fish processing industry in Fleetwood. The Committee was also informed that Lancashire County Developments Limited (LCDL) had set up an enhanced apprenticeship scheme providing extra help for young people to enable them to raise their achievement through work-based learning.

- It was difficult to assess the effectiveness of financial resources available through so many different funding streams. In terms of capacity, a lot of people were needed to run activities for children and young people, as well as time required to discuss, develop and organise them. The challenge occurred to varying degrees in public, community and voluntary and faith sectors.
- Whilst the 12 Lancashire district councils were each at different stages in terms of developing their children and young people agenda, the representatives present at the meeting agreed that significant progress had been made since the Audit Commission's report in February 2007. Specific issues were being discussed by the ECM Lead Officers Group, which was generating its own agenda/discussion on issues of concern to the district councils. David Ledsham informed the Committee that the district councils had been asked to assess their progress on the County and District Council Partnership Action Plan, following which the Lead Officers Group would discuss the position and offer appropriate support to district councils as necessary.
- A question was raised about the safeguarding of privacy in respect of access to the single child record 'ContactPoint'. The Committee was given an assurance that the record would contain basic information only and that access would be restricted to authorised users who would have to go through appropriate security checks. It was suggested that an Information Sharing and Assessment document, which included information about the Common Assessment Framework, the Lead Professional Role, ContactPoint and the Children's Services Directory should be circulated to all members of the Committee for information..
- Concern was expressed about problems concerning inappropriate on-line relationships developing between children and adults, particularly grooming, and how this could be addressed/prevented. Pat Jefferson suggested that the issue could be raised with the Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board and that there was also an opportunity to work with parents through the Extended Services in Schools Initiative. Codes of Practice also included training for schools on this issue and packages had been developed for parents.

In concluding the discussion, the Chair thanked the District Council Members and Officers and the County Officers for their presentations and contributions to the discussion and expressed her hope that it had been helpful to the County and District Council Members and Officers present. It was intended that the presentations and details of the issues raised during the course of the discussion would be forwarded to all the District Councils in Lancashire for consideration.

**12. Resolved:** - 1) That the report and presentations on how partnership working between the County and District Councils is delivering improved outcomes for children and young people in Lancashire be received.

2) That the information and presentations given to the Committee and details of the issues raised during the course of the discussion be forwarded to all the District Councils in Lancashire for consideration.

3) That the Information Sharing and Assessment Document referred to above be circulated to all members of the Committee for information.

### **Consideration of the Forward Plan**

In February 2007, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee had agreed that all the Overview and Scrutiny Committees should be presented with the latest Forward Plan at every meeting, in order to give them the opportunity to review those Executive decisions that were relevant to their area of work. Accordingly, the Committee's attention was drawn to the Forward Plan for September to December 2007. An appropriate electronic link had been provided to the County Council's Democratic Information System website.

Mr Cridland raised the issue of School Transport as an area of concern and Claire Evans, Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer, undertook to forward to him a copy of a report on this matter, which had been considered by the Sustainable Development Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**13. Resolved:** - That the report be noted.

### **Work Plan 2007/08**

A plan summarising the work to be undertaken by the Committee during 2007/08 was presented. The plan would be updated and presented to each meeting of the Committee for information.

**14. Resolved:** - That the summary of work to be undertaken by the Committee in 2007/08, as now presented, be noted.

### **Report of Items for Information**

A list of items for background reading and general interest for August/September 2007 was presented. The list included information on a number of service developments and consultations.

**15. Resolved:** That the report now presented setting out items of information on current issues in the area of Children and Young People be noted.

### **Date of Next Meeting**

The Committee noted that its next meeting would take place on Tuesday 9 October 2007 at **2.00pm** at County Hall, Preston.

I M Fisher  
County Secretary and Solicitor

County Hall  
Preston