

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Monday, 4 October 2010

<u>Present:</u>	Councillor	C Meaden (Chair)	
	Councillors	T Harney P Hayes K Hayes A McArdle	C Povall T Smith P Williams Neale
<u>Deputy:</u>	Councillor	S Williams (for W Clements)	
<u>Apologies</u>		Mr M Clarke Mrs J Kearney	Mrs J Owens
<u>Co-opted:</u>		Mr R Neale	

24 MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST / PARTY WHIP

Members were asked to consider whether they had a personal or prejudicial interest in connection with the item on the agenda and, if so, to declare it and to state the nature of such interest.

Members were reminded that they should also declare, pursuant to paragraph 18 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules, whether they were subject to a party whip in connection with the item to be considered and, if so, to declare it and state the nature of the whipping arrangement.

Councillor C Meaden declared a personal general interest because of her daughter's employment within the Children and Young People's Department.

25 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE TASK FORCE - MOTION

Further to minute 23 (14/9/10), the Committee considered the motion which, having been moved at the last meeting, it was then agreed to consider it at a special meeting.

Councillor McArdle moved, seconded by the Chair, that –

“In view of the fact that this Scrutiny and Overview Committee is charged within the Council's Constitution with the task of Scrutinising Children's Services, and that this role appears to have been bypassed through the appointment of a Task Force acting outside the normal range of Council meetings and procedures, this Committee urgently requests the following:

- (i) A standing item of the regular minutes of the Children and Young People's Task Force on this agenda for the duration of its existence.
- (ii) A report which sets out the process that was followed in the selection and appointment of the Task Force members.
- (iii) A copy of any register or declaration of interests by Task Force members.
- (iv) Details of whether any vetting procedures were required as they have apparently been given access to Looked after Children, and, if so, whether or not those procedures were followed.
- (v) A presentation from Officers that mirrors the presentation that was originally given to the Task Force which has informed the questions on this area within the consultation questionnaire.
- (vi) A detailed explanation from officers on the exact meaning and implication of each question concerning Children's Services in the questionnaire. (For example, when questions talk about voluntary services stepping in to provide alternative services, are we talking about commissioning services from voluntary agencies, or just hoping they will fill a gap with no additional resources provided if we withdraw from providing services ourselves?)
- (vii) Any potential costings that may have been drawn up as part of the options being considered."

Committee members had also been circulated with a copy of a minute on the task forces from the Scrutiny Programme Board of 20 September (minute 28 refers) which had resolved, "That the matters referred to by the Chair in relation to the Task Forces be referred to each of the themed Overview and Scrutiny Committees and they be requested to seek information in relation to those issues which fall within their remit."

After some debate on the motion, the Director responded to the points raised and emphasised that at no point during Task Force meetings was children's safety compromised, all the Task Force members having been CRB cleared anyway. The presentations which were given to the Task Force were all available to view on the internet along with the papers which they considered and the minutes.

As members of the Task Force were not elected members, bound by a code of conduct, there was no formal requirement for a register of interests but at the first meeting of the Task Force, Mr Potter, the Chair had asked everyone to introduce themselves describing what they did and their connection with young people.

The Director remarked that, from his observations the Task Force had looked at the way services were delivered in Wirral and in some instances drew on their knowledge of other areas particularly around the work of the voluntary sector.

A Member suggested the need to be kept informed of the work of the Task Force and also suggested that Mr Potter could be invited to the next meeting of the Committee.

It was then moved as an amendment by Councillor Harney, seconded by Councillor Mrs Williams, that –

- (1) "This Committee notes the appointment of a Children and Young People's Task Force.
- (2) This Committee welcomes the involvement of young people in this.

- (3) This Committee recognises its duty to scrutinise the whole area of Children and Young People.
- (4) This Committee recognises that reports on the progress of the 2010-2011 budget and indications for the 2011-2012 budget are brought to this Committee on a regular basis.”

The amendment was put and carried (7:3) and then becoming the substantive motion, it was –

Resolved (7:3) –

- (1) This Committee notes the appointment of a Children and Young People’s Task Force.**
- (2) This Committee welcomes the involvement of young people in this.**
- (3) This Committee recognises its duty to scrutinise the whole area of Children and Young People.**
- (4) This Committee recognises that reports on the progress of the 2010-2011 budget and indications for the 2011-2012 budget are brought to this Committee on a regular basis.**