

DEVON CHILDREN'S TRUST BOARD

At a meeting held at the Langstone Cliff Hotel, Dawlish Warren on

1 March 2007

Present

Board Members

Councillor John Smith (Executive Member, Children and Young People's Services, DCC) (Chairman)
Kathy Beechen (Voluntary and Community Organisations – Secondary Age Range)
Faith Butler (Devon Association of Governors)
Superintendent Ian Curtis (Devon and Cornwall Constabulary)
Dr Stella Imong (Devon PCT)
Liam McGrath (Children's Trust Programme Director)
Bruce Pollit (Surestart)
Jenny Rudge (Connexions)
Councillor Marguerite Shapland (Non-Executive Director, Devon PCT)
Tim Tod (Devon Children's Fund)
Anne Whiteley (Director of Children and Young People's Services, DCC)
Nichola Winstanley (Devon Children with Special Needs Parent/Carers Forum)
Judith Wright (Voluntary and Community Organisations – Early Years)
Eelke Zoestbergen (Devon and Cornwall Police Authority)

Also Present

Chris Aston (Head of Strategy and Commissioning Inclusive Education, Children and Young People's Services, DCC)
Ruth Dale (Communications Lead, Devon Children's Trust)
Brian Grady (Commissioning and Procurement Manager, Children and Young People's Services, DCC)
Tim Leishman (Children's Trust Programme Manager)

Apologies

Councillor Hugo Barton (Executive Support Member, Social Care, DCC)
Jeannette Kemlo (Devon Children with Special Needs Parent/Carers Forum)
Penny Mathers (Children's Services Advisor for Devon, Government Office for the South West)
Phil Norrey (DCC Chief Executive)
Dr Virginia Pearson (Director of Public Health, Devon PCT)
Councillor Nick Way (Executive Support Member, Schools, DCC)

1. Minutes of Previous Meeting (11 January 2007)

The Minutes were approved as a correct record, subject to Paragraph (b) of Minute 5(i) (Children's Trust Governance) being amended to read: *"that a report on the outcome of the consultation be submitted to the Board meeting in May 2007"*.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes

(a) Joint Chief Officers Group and Children's Trust Programme Office Resource

Liam McGrath reported as follows:

Resourcing of Programme Office – good progress was being made on securing the additional resources (cash or “in kind” secondments) needed to support the delivery of the Children's Trust programme. The appointment of an analyst had been an important step forward.

Establishment of Chief Officers Group - the first meeting was likely to take place towards the end of April 2007. The appointment by the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary of a representative on the Chief Officers Group had been deferred pending a review of its arrangements for representation on partnerships throughout the Force area. One of the Group's first tasks would be to lead the review of the Children and Young People's Plan (see Minute 5 below).

(b) Children's Trust Governance Consultation

Liam McGrath gave an update on feedback from the formal consultation on the proposed constitution and governance arrangements, pointing out that the consultation period would end on 6 March 2007.

The Board discussed concerns expressed by some headteachers about increased bureaucracy associated with the Children's Trust and the performance monitoring regime. It was felt that the benefits of the Trust and the new ways of working would become more apparent over time and that the clearer focus given to the work of the Children's Trust Local Forums and the introduction of local commissioning would help in this regard.

(c) Independent Chairperson for Board

Liam McGrath reported that the position had been advertised and three applications received. Board members and children and young people would have the opportunity to be involved in the selection process.

(d) Membership Changes

Liam McGrath introduced a report comparing the current membership of the Board with that proposed under the new constitution and governance arrangements, and identifying matters still to be resolved.

The Board endorsed the proposed alterations to membership.

Action on all matters: Liam McGrath

3. Special Schools Strategic Commissioning Review

The Board considered a scoping report for a project to develop a partnership commissioning approach centred around special schools to reconfiguring services for children and young people with complex special needs.

The report was introduced by Chris Aston (Head of Strategy and Commissioning Inclusive Education, DCC) who pointed out that the project aimed to ensure a continuum of provision within special and mainstream schools for children and young people with: needs on the autistic spectrum; severe social, emotional and

behavioural difficulties; and learning difficulties and/or disabilities with a particular focus on profound and multiple learning difficulties and lifelong medical conditions.

The project sought to: remove the barriers between special and mainstream schools to facilitate movement of children and staff between them; provide outreach support to help mainstream schools educate children with less complex needs and thus increase the capacity of special schools to educate those with more complex needs; and reduce independent sector placements outside Devon.

The Board welcomed the project. Matters covered during discussion included:

- providing for out of county placements within the south west;
- scrutiny by partners of proposals for reconfigured services (and scrutiny arrangements generally);
- involving the voluntary sector;
- transition from child to adult social care;
- raising the leaving age for all special schools to 19.

Action: Chris Aston

4. Joint Area Review (JAR) Action Plan

The Board considered a progress report on the implementation of the JAR Action Plan which was introduced by Liam McGrath.

The report referred to:

- performance monitoring arrangements, resourcing and other issues and risks;
- consideration being given to future performance management of the JAR recommendations in the light of a requirement for a review of the Children and Young Person's Plan by June 2007 (see Minute 5 below).

It was noted that implementation of the Action Plan was taking place on the agreed timescales.

AGREED:

that "Duty to Co-operate Partners":

(a) secure appropriate representation/participation in monitoring arrangements;

(b) give active consideration to gaps in resources which would be discussed by the Chief Officers Group.

Action: Liam McGrath

5. CYPP Review/Annual Performance Assessment Approach

Liam McGrath outlined changes to the Children and Young People's Plan review process following supplementary guidance from DfES and OFSTED and how the review would be approached in Devon. The CYPP would be reviewed by June 2007 and a refreshed Plan issued in April 2008 which would be aligned with the Local Area Agreement and the Sustainable Communities Plan. This would allow for proper needs assessment and an outcomes-based plan. The DfES and OFSTED had stated that the review should include a detailed assessment of progress and

improvement, and this would be used for the APA in place of the previous self-assessment.

A copy of a letter giving a detailed explanation of the approach to the CYPP Review was circulated with the agenda.

AGREED:

(a) that the requirement from DfES/OFSTED and the new timetable for the CYPP review and subsequent refresh be noted;

(b) that the review process outlined by Liam McGrath and set out in the letter be endorsed.

Action: Liam McGrath

6. AXS (Access to Services) Network Development

Tim Leishman, Children's Trust Programme Manager, gave a presentation on progress on the development of the AXS pathway for an integrated, locally based early assessment and intervention service for children and young people, covering:

- work within the 9 Pathfinder areas based on local learning community areas across Devon to find the "best fit" for the county;
- consultations with stakeholders on network configurations; management and service delivery arrangements; and involvement of parents, children, young people and families for the roll out of the AXS pathway to non-pathfinder areas.

A copy of the consultation document was circulated with the agenda.

The Board noted the present position.

Action: Tim Leishman

7. Joint Commissioning, Devolved Decision-Making and Grant-Making.

Brian Grady, Commissioning and Procurement Manager, DCC Children and Young People's Services, and Kathy Beechen, Assistant Director, Devon Community Foundation, gave a presentation on the opportunities within the emerging Children's Trust joint commissioning arrangements for the voluntary sector to be given responsibility for a small grants programme supporting community organisations. A report by Brian Grady was circulated with the agenda.

It was proposed to establish a working party to identify and explore options, and develop a business case.

AGREED that the principle of including a grant making function within the Children's Trust joint commissioning arrangements be approved.

Action: Brian Grady

8. Next Board Meeting

Thursday 17 May 2007 (11.30am – 1.30pm) at County Hall, Exeter.

(The meeting started at 11.30am and finished at 1.35pm)