

DEVON CHILDREN'S TRUST – BOARD MEETING

Thursday, 28 February 2008

Present

Board Members

Mary Nisbett (Independent Chair)
Kathy Beechen (Voluntary Sector – Youth Services)
Councillor Alan Connett (District Councils)
John Davey (Connexions)
Dr Virginia Pearson (Director of Public Health, Devon PCT)
Bruce Pollit (Parents of Early Years Children)
Debbie Pritchard (Children's Trust Programme Director)
Councillor Marguerite Shapland (Non-Executive Director, Devon PCT)
David Tall (Devon Association of Governors)
Jo Tennant (Devon and Cornwall Constabulary)
Tim Todd (vice Sarah Baker Voluntary Sector Early Years)
Anne Whiteley (Director of Children and Young People's Services, DCC)
Eelke Zoestbergen (Devon and Cornwall Police Authority)

Also Present

Brian Grady (Joint Strategic Commissioning Team Manager, CYPS, DCC)
Gerry Rufolo (Committee Secretariat, DCC)
Claire Wright (CYPS)

Apologies

Sarah Baker (Voluntary Sector Youth Services)
Councillor Hugo Barton (Executive Support Member DCC)
Nicola Bulbeck (Devon District Councils)
Faith Butler (Devon Association of Governors)
Juliet Doswell (Faith Communities)
Gary Ferrand (Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service)
Dr Stella Imong (Clinician nominated by Devon PCT)
Jeannette Kemlo (Parent Carer)
Phil Norrey (DCC Chief Executive)
Chris Roberts (Learning and Skills Council)
Jenny Rudge (Connexions, SW)
Councillor John Smith (Executive Member, CYPS, DCC)
Councillor Nick Way (Executive Support Member, Schools, DCC)

31 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2007 were signed as a correct record.

32 New Member

The Chairman welcomed Jo Tennant from the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary to her first meeting of the Board as a new member.

33 Children and Young People's Plan 2008 - 11

The Committee received a report by Anne Whiteley on the draft 2008/11 Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP). The CYPP was widely circulated to stake holders

on 20 December 2007 and consultations were ongoing. A final draft would be presented to the Executive on 18 March 2008 and thereafter to the County Council for approval.

Anne Whiteley explained the underlying principles, values and aims underpinning the CYPP and indicated that there would be additional documents associated with the finalised document including a detailed Needs Analysis covering the County and a shortened version of the CYPP for universal use.

The Government had also produced its own Children's Plan, Building Brighter Futures, for the period up to 2020 including indications of funding and highlighting the objective of 'narrowing the gap' for children in the lowest 20% in terms of academic attainment and to improve their life chances and opportunities. A national programme to include Devon would be developed to facilitate the sharing of best practice between local authorities and partners. To assist this process a regional event was being organised for 1 May to which 5 persons from Devon's Children's Trust would be appointed and who would feedback to the Executive and this Board.

Debbie Pritchard explained the timetable for the adoption of the new Plan and emphasised that it was an evolving and changing document but with a clear direction.

There remained a number of consultations with statutory partners still outstanding before a final version was presented to the County Council.

Councillor Connett reported his observations on the Draft which he would confirm with a more detailed written submission and to possible further comment from other District Councils. He referred to the overuse of professional jargon and acronyms and the need to emphasise to a greater degree the role of fathers and parents generally in making a positive contribution and promoting the aspirations of children and young people; and to refer to a greater degree to the work with the majority of children within the 'middle' in terms of academic attainment and life chances.

The Chairman highlighted the key role of the CYPP in the work of the Board and its constituent partners and commended the opening paragraphs giving a clear vision and ethos and to the common thread through out pertaining to the need to inspire and to raise the aspirations of all children and young people in Devon.

AGREED that the Draft Plan be approved subject to consideration of any further comments from District Councils and that the final plan, when approved, be circulated to the Board.

34 Devon Local Area Agreement 2008 - 11

Debbie Pritchard reported on this paper on the LAA 2008 -2011, its funding and focus themes which aligned with the Children and Young People's Plan. The Board also received the extract of the LAA in respect of children and young people relating to the strategy and the key objective to 'Narrow the Gap'. A pathfinder area was proposed, possibly in Ilfracombe.

Members referred to the importance of evidence based information to justify national and local funding and in the setting of local targets against a background of emphasis on national priorities.

AGREED that a progress report be submitted to the Board.

35 Proposals for Local Delivery

The Board received a paper by Anne Whiteley on the governance arrangements of the Children's Trust and the proposed way forward. This included the proposed composition and role of the Children's Trust Local Planning and Implementation Partnership (CTLPIP) to help ensure effective local input and accountability. The question of resourcing of the Partnerships would need to be resolved once their acceptance was agreed in principle.

AGREED that the proposed governance arrangements be supported and developed as expeditiously as possible.

36 Going for Good

Anne Whiteley reported on the ongoing work to achieve a 'Good' rating for Devon's Children's and Young People's 'Safe Guarding' services following the 2007/08 Annual Performance Assessment by OFSTED of 'Adequate'. However the assessment criteria for 2008/09 had recently changed with higher or different thresholds. This late notification was causing problems for local authorities nationally and on which the Local Government Association have made representations to Government.

A self assessment day with stakeholders was being arranged for 6 May involving the Trust Executive when these and other issues would be discussed. The County Council remained focussed on achieving a 'Good' rating despite the changes.

37 Special Needs Review

Brian Grady reported on the progress of the review and consultation in respect of the Joint Strategy for Children with Special Needs. Consultations with parent/carers would continue to be held across the county. These were covering services across all ages including the transition phase and respite support. They would help ensure equity of access with specialist centres for more complex needs and ties with Children's Centres and special schools. Following this consultation stage the joint business case would be developed and strategic commissioning would commence.

Nichola Winstanley indicated that notwithstanding some of the practical consultation difficulties the proposals were being well received by parents and carers and appeared to be going in the right direction, subject to effective implementation.

The Chairman asked for an update to the next meeting.

38 Special Educational Needs Task Group

The Board received the 12 recommendations by the County Council's Children and Young People's Overview and Scrutiny Committee's Task Group.

Anne Whiteley in addressing the recommendations reported on additional funding made in the 2008/09 budget from the Dedicated Schools Budget approved by the Schools Forum and from the Directorate's Children's budget involving 'invest to save' proposals. There was also additional grant funding over three years from Government for Carers' Breaks which would be particularly significant in years 2 and 3.

Arising on questions from the Board Anne Whiteley indicated that she would provide more information on the work nationally in respect of dyslexia, an area not identified in the Needs Assessment as a priority issue in Devon. Mr Tall commended the recommendation relating to the SEN Framework which had been accepted by the Devon Association of Head teachers.

39 Hear by Right

The Chairman was pleased to report that all the constituent members had appointed Children's Champions to the Task Group. The Chairman also gave a update on the Hear by Right project including initiatives in Teignbridge District Council and involving other District Councils; on the County Council initiative when the Youth Parliament would 'take over' the Council for a day in May; the appointment of a new Children Trust participation worker; and to the use of internet sites 'Bebo' and 'Face Book' to highlight the work of the Trust and its partners. The Chairman also reported on the elections to the Youth Parliament and on their business plan; and on work force development.

Claire Wright, newly appointed CT Communications Officer, also reported on her role in promoting positive views of young people and the need for a fair and balanced perspective, especially within the local media. Jo Tennant indicated that anti social behaviour was identified as the Constabulary's number one priority and also agreed on the need for a fair perspective and balance.

40 Children's Trust Board Development

The Board received a paper by Debbie Pritchard on a proposed Development Day to discuss the roles of the Trust, the Board, constituent partners and other related matters.

AGREED that a development day for the Board be arranged for Tuesday, 10 June (time and venue to be confirmed).

41 Any Other Business

(a) The Chairman reported on the annual Devon Achievement Young People's Awards Ceremony and requested nominations from partners by 2 May 2008. Further details including nomination forms can be found at:

<http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/learning/schools/youthawards.htm>

(b) Anne Whitely reported on the appointments within the new Integrated Youth Service covering Youth Services, Connexions and the Youth Offending Team and the senior joint LA/PCT appointment for the post of Assistant Director Integrated Services.

42 Meetings during 2008

The Board noted that meetings will be held on the following dates:

6th May APA Challenge Day (all morning, time to be confirmed, venue Gypsy Hill Hotel Exeter)

15 May, 10 July, 25 September, 13 November,

(all Thursdays from 11.30am – 1.30pm at County Hall followed by lunch)

and 10 June Board Development day (details to be confirmed).

The meeting started at 11.30 am and finished at 1.20 pm

Note: Information about Devon's Children's Trust including Agenda and Minutes for meetings of this Board can be accessed at:

<http://www.devonchildrenstrust.org.uk/index>