



YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

**Minutes of the meeting held on 30 April 2014
11.30 am - 12.54 pm in the Shrewsbury Room, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire, SY2 6ND**

Responsible Officer: Tim Ward
Email: tim.ward@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 252739

Present

Shropshire Councillors

Councillor Joyce Barrow (Chairman)
Councillors Peggy Mullock (Vice Chairman), Hannah Fraser, Heather Kidd, Robert Macey,
Kevin Pardy, David Turner and Paul Wynn

Co-Opted Members (Voting)

Dominic Wilson

Co-Opted Members (Voting)

47 Apologies and Substitutions

47.1 Apologies for absence were received from Kevin Turley and Austin Atkinson. The Chair informed the meeting that Heather Kidd and David Turner had advised that they might be late as they were attending a meeting in Craven Arms prior to this one.

48 Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

48.1 None were disclosed.

49 Minutes

49.1 RESOLVED

That, the minutes of the meeting held in 26 March 2014 be approved and signed by the Chairman as a correct record

50 Public Question Time

50.1 There were no questions from members of the public

51 Members' Question Time

51.1 There were no questions from Members

52 Changes to Youth Services

- 52.1 The Committee received a presentation from the Area Commissioner (North) updating them on proposed changes to Youth Services. A new commissioning approach was to be adopted with a new service model involving local governance through local youth boards who would procure services from local providers. Work had been carried out into current provision and young people's requirements in order to identify any improvements that could be made in the future. The Area Commissioner emphasised the importance of involving the young people throughout the whole of the process.
- 52.2 The Area Commissioner advised that two consultations had been held, with one consultation into interim proposals for the financial year 2014 – 15 following reductions in budget and staffing resources and one consultation on future models for delivery from 2015 – 16 onwards. Officers were currently evaluating and validating the responses and no decisions had been taken at this stage. The response to the consultations had been very good with over 1,000 responses being received for the consultation into the interim proposals, 81% of these coming from young people between the ages of 10 and 19 years.
- 52.3 The Area Commissioner then outlined the time table for future work in order for the new arrangements to be in place in April 2015.
- 52.4 During the discussion a Member commented that she felt that it was short-sighted to reduce the funding for youth provision. She queried how the Council would ensure that a good quality service was provided going forward and whether there would be any growth in provision. The Area Commissioner stated that provision of a quality service would be a key part of the contract awarded. However he could not give any guarantees regarding growth in provisions as decisions would be made at a local level, local boards would be in a good position to know the sources of additional funding available in their area, and whether extra services were needed.
- 52.5 A member also commented that as the Council was keen to involve young people in the development of the new services it might have been appropriate to have invited representatives such as the Shropshire MYPs to be present at the meeting. In response the Chairman indicated that the Shropshire MYPs had a standing invitation to all meetings of the Committee. In turn the Member advised her that the MYPs had not been aware of this meeting.

- 52.6 A further Member commented that with the reduction in the Council's budget more reliance would fall upon voluntary provision and finding funding from elsewhere and that she had concerns regarding where this funding might be found especially given that funding had been removed from Local Joint Committees. In response several Members gave examples where funding had been secured from other organisations in their areas. A Member questioned how sustainable this would be going forward and also commented that this might lead to various levels of service being available in different areas. She also asked how the Council would ensure that it met its statutory obligations. In turn the Area Commissioner advised that the Council would seek as far as practicable to procure equal services over the entire county. The Director of Children's Services commented that the "Positive Activities" Team was only one aspect of delivering youth work and there was a team of dedicated youth workers within the early help team.
- 52.7 A Member asked whether the areas covered by the proposed area youth boards had been agreed as it was important that this was given careful consideration to ensure that the areas were able to meet the needs of the young people. She commented that the very rural areas presented specific problems as it was difficult to find volunteers and also given the lack of public transport it was difficult for young people to travel far to access services. She asked that any proposals were "rural proofed". In response the Area Commissioner advised that the areas covered by the proposed Youth Boards had yet to be finalised, but that it was critical that the areas were drawn up correctly. The very rural nature of the County needed to be taken into consideration when planning the service and a wider discussion was needed around this subject.
- 52.8 A Member enquired how many people were currently employed in the Positive Activities Team. In reply the Area Commissioner indicated that there were currently 101 people employed which equated to 20.6 FTE posts.
- 52.9 A Member commented that the Town and Parish Councils might be able to take over some of the provision of youth work. The Area Commissioner advised the meeting that this might be a possibility and more work was needed to investigate this further.
- 59.10 A Member informed the meeting that he had spoken to a youth worker who had expressed concern about one of the consultation events they had attended. The Chairman commented that if Council employees had any concerns then they should speak directly to their line manager.
- 59.11 The Chairman thanked the Area Commissioner for his presentation and it was agreed that a further report should be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

53 Universal Free School Meals

- 53.1 The Committee received the report of the Shire Services Manager on information relating to how the introduction of universal free school meals for all state funded infant school children would impact on schools in Shropshire together with the work

being undertaken by Shire Services to ensure schools were prepared for the increase in meals to be served from September 2014.

- 53.2 The Shire Services Manager reminded members that the Coalition Government had announced that from September 2014 all state funded infant school children would be eligible to receive a free school meal and that legislation would place a legal duty on schools to deliver this commitment. This legislation would also include powers to extend the duty to additional year groups in the future.
- 53.3 The Shire Services Manager also informed the meeting that capital funding of £150 million was available nationally in 2014-15 to upgrade kitchens and to increase dining capacity where required. Shropshire would receive £662,822 of this money, the distribution of which had been agreed at a meeting of the Schools Forum. Transitional funding of £22.5 million was also being made available nationally in 2014-15 to support small schools in addressing the particular challenges they faced and that 79 schools in Shropshire would be eligible for this funding. Revenue funding of £1 billion would be made available in the 2014/15 and 2015/16 academic years to provide a flat rate of £2.30 per meal taken based on actual take-up by newly eligible infant pupils.
- 53.4 The Shire Services Manager advised the meeting that Shire Services currently provided catering services to 112 primary schools in Shropshire and it was anticipated that there would be an increase of approximately 40% in the number of meals served per day. The team was currently working with schools in order to develop their plan which would identify requirements and they would continue to meet with schools individually to advise them of any issues which needed to be addressed and to check out any concerns. She commented that the majority of schools in the county were well placed to provide the extra meals.
- 53.5 A Member enquired as to whether the grant for the capital expenditure was sufficient. In reply the Shire Service Manager assured him that it was considered sufficient as there was no major building work required unlike in some other areas where provision was undertaken by Shire Services.
- 53.6 A Member commented that it might be difficult to know what the uptake of the free meals would be and asked what provisions were being put in place to ensure that there was not too much waste. The Shire Services Manager stated that there was a need to ensure schools had procedures in place to accurately assess the number of meals required.
- 53.5 A Member also commented that there would be many schools having to adjust to serving larger numbers and asked what provision was being made for the sharing of good practice. The Shire Services Manager advised that good practice was shared as part of the dialogue with schools.
- 53.5 A Member asked what provision had been made for schools that did not use Shire Services for the provision of meals. In response the Shire Services Manager advised that she had been in contact with the Schools Food Trust to ensure that help was available if required. The Service Delivery Manager also advised that in considering the allocation of funding no differentiation had been made between those schools that used or did not use Shire Services.

- 53.6 A Member commented that free school meals were used to identify those eligible for pupil premium and asked how this was to be covered in future. The Service Delivery Manager confirmed that he had recently received a letter from David Laws, Minister of State for Schools, reminding councils of the importance of identifying those that would be eligible for free school meals, and that this would be passed on the Head Teachers. The Director of Children's Services commented that there was a need to get the message out to parents.
- 53.7 A Member commented that as a primary school governor she had been apprehensive about the proposals and thanked the Shire Services Manager and her team for all the work they had done.
- 53.8 The Chairman thanked the Shire Services Manager for her very full report and for all the work that she and her team had done to ensure the smooth provision of the universal free school meals.

54 Date of Next Meeting

54.1 It was noted that the next meeting would be held at 10.00am on Wednesday 18 June 2014

Signed (Chairman)

Date: