

AT A MEETING of the CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ADVISORY PANEL of HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL held at The Castle, Winchester on 31 MAY 2011.

Chairman:
a Councillor M.J. Tucker

Councillors:

a	A. Evans	p	D. Keast
p	Mrs Charlotte Bailey	a	Roz Muschamp
p	R. Bolton	p	Mrs Pamela Mutton
p	B.D. Dash	p	Mrs Jackie Porter

In attendance at the invitation of the Chairman:

Councillor Roy Perry (Executive Lead Member for Children's Services)

Members of the Education Advisory Panel

Councillors: B. Collin, P. Edgar, K. Evans, M. Kemp-Gee, R. Kimber, R. McIntosh.

41. **SELECTION OF A CHAIRMAN**

In the absence of both the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, the Panel was asked to select a temporary Chairman for the meeting from those present. Councillor Peter Edgar was nominated due to his familiarity with the agenda and took the Chair.

42. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors: A. Evans, R. Muschamp and M. Tucker.

43. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were mindful that where they believed they had a personal or prejudicial interest in any matter considered at the meeting declared that interest at the time of the relevant debate and, having regard to the circumstances described in paragraphs 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the County Council's Code of Conduct, considered whether to leave the meeting whilst the matter was discussed, save for exercising any right to speak in accordance with paragraph 12 of the code.

44. **MINUTES**

The minutes from the meeting of 8 February 2011 were considered by the Panel, agreed to be a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

45. **MEMBERS FEEDBACK ON VISITS TO CHILDREN'S HOMES**

No Member of the Panel had visited a Children's Home since the previous meeting.

46. **CONSULTATION ON "SUPPORT AND ASPIRATION: A NEW APPROACH TO SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITY"**

The Panel considered the report of the Director of Children's Services (Item 6 in the Minute Book) regarding the Department for Education Green Paper.

The key proposals in the Green Paper were outlined to the Panel and some of the implications of these explained. The Panel noted the significance of any proposals as approximately one in five children have Special Educational Needs at some point. The consultation process was discussed and it was confirmed that Members would be sent the draft County Council response for comment, when it was possible to do so. It was also confirmed that the presentation included in the report was a neutral explanation of the proposals, supplied by the Government department. It was asked whether Hampshire County Council might become a "pathfinder" authority for the proposals and it was explained that the pathfinder requirements were not known at that stage.

The Panel considered several of the consultation questions in detail (identified in Appendix one of the report) and on a number of them made several observations and recommendations, in particular:

Question 40:

- It was felt that families would continue to need access to good quality, professional advice and that the County Council was best place to help parents to enable them to make informed decisions.
- When carrying out a monitoring or inspection role, the County Council should take into account the five goals established by "Every Child Matters".
- A need to be very clear about respective roles within any partnership between the local authority and other organisations was identified.

Question 41:

- The importance of practically being able to provide a service for which a need was identified was discussed, as was the importance of enabling Education, Health and Care plans to be applicable to post 16 students in education at either a school or a college. In particular, the difficulty of balancing budgets and therefore maintaining provision through changeable periods of student numbers due to the per student funding mechanism was highlighted.

- The appeals process was discussed and it was proposed that an independent appeals system, similar to that for school applications be introduced.

Question 56

- The implications of the proposed banding system was raised and in light of the difficulties with continuity of funding identified under Question 41, concern was expressed about how provision would be financed. It was agreed that the Government needed to be made aware of the interim and long term costs of the policy.

Question 57

- The Panel were agreed that support should exist to enable voluntary groups who provide care for children with special educational needs to maintain their facilities.
- The assessment of children with special educational needs was considered and there was concern that organisations providing a service should not also act as advisors. The Panel felt that regardless of how it is carried out, assessment must involve the right people and focus on the needs of the child.
- It was questioned how an expanded voluntary sector would be funded and furthermore how it would be held accountable.

Question 58

- The advantages and difficulties of a banding system were discussed and there was concern that there was little flexibility within a band and that fewer bands would increase this problem. There was also concern that the out of band safety net requirements would add to administration costs and furthermore that banding would encourage people to appeal.
- The question was raised as to how the financial contribution from the Health Service would fit into bands.

It was resolved:

That having considered the consultation questions in the Green Paper, the Panel ask that their comments be part of a consolidated response from the Children's Services department to the Government.