

**MINUTES of the meeting of Early Years Development and
Childcare Partnership held at Coningsby Children's
Centre, Coningsby Street, Leominster on Thursday 11 May
2006 at 7.00 p.m.**

Present:

Norris Boyland	C of E Diocesan Authority
Sheila Dunsford	OFSTED
Jon Dudley	Children and Young People's Directorate
Carol Jenkins	Sure Start
Liz Lord	Independent Schools Sector
Lyn Marsden	Herefordshire Childminding Association
Ailsa Robbie	Marches Family Network
George Salmon	Children and Young People's Directorate
Klaus Wedell	Chairman

In attendance:

Sue Fiennes	Children and Young People's Directorate
Andy Gosling	Sure Start
Ros Hatherill	Children and Young People's Directorate
Alison Murphy	Children and Young People's Directorate
Sue Peasgood	Children and Young People's Directorate
Councillor Don Rule	Herefordshire Council
Bryan Twitty	Children and Young People's Directorate

581. ELECTION OF CHAIR

Professor Klaus Wedell.

582. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIR

Jan McColl.

583. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Gill Bilbrough, Hazel Blankley, Joyce Elliott, Di Gibson, Janice Greenow, Paul Haley, Cllr Jenny Hyde, Jan McColl, Liv Moss, Carla Preston, Councillor Sally Robertson.

584. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

None.

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585. LATE ITEMS / ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

586. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

None.

587. MINUTES

George Salmon drew the Partnership's attention to Minute 570 (**MERRY-GO-ROUND NURSERY**), and reported that he had received a briefing note from Nikki Ovel, on her strategy following a serious fire at Merry-Go-round Nursery. He said that he would circulate the note to all childcare settings.

AGREED: that the minutes of the meeting held on 09 March 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

588. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

Sue Fiennes updated members on progress made with the Herefordshire Children and Young Peoples' Plan (C&YPP). The Key points were:

- The C&YPP had been adopted by partner organisations and the C&YPP Board, and also by Cabinet in March 2006. All Herefordshire Councillors now had a copy, and it was to be considered at full Council on 12 May 2006.
- On Page 33 of the Plan, under the title "Where do you want to be?", the EYDCP was mentioned; therefore the partnership's status would be addressed.
- It was important now to improve Public understanding of the work of the C&YPP, and EYDCP, and to recruit the help of the Council's Communications Dept to help promote it.
- The Extended Schools model presented a considerable challenge, and it was important for the Schools Sector to work with its Early Years colleagues. Recently both sectors had been invited to discuss budgetary issues, so that Extended Schools became more of a joint endeavour. Weobley High School was an example of best practice, and how the model could work well, and she hoped to roll out a similar strategy for models elsewhere in Herefordshire.
- The "rural environment" presented a unique and ongoing challenge for Herefordshire. It would be necessary to find creative ways to manage the rural areas, and deciding how to deliver the C&YPP in rural areas was a fundamental part of the action plan to be developed.
- Klaus Wedell pointed out that the DfES was aware of the creativity and lateral thinking needed in Herefordshire, and it put the county very much in the "front line" with developing a rural strategy.
- Sue Fiennes emphasised that any suggestions from the EYDCP would be welcomed at any time.

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589. NURSERY EDUCATION FUNDING: EXTENSION TO 38 WEEKS

George Salmon reported that, following the meeting held on 09 March 2006, Karen Beadman had contacted all Private, Voluntary and Independent Early Years providers. A number of them had also visited her to discuss the issues surrounding the forthcoming increase in Nursery Education Funding from 33 weeks to 38 weeks per year. Over 70% had expressed a preference for the profile option based on a variable number of weeks per term. As a result, this was the option that the Council would implement from the Autumn Term 2006.

590. FINANCIAL REPORT 2005/06 AND 2006/07

Ros Hatherill presented budgets for 2005/06 and 2006/07. She circulated detailed information on the current budget to the end of the financial year April 2006, the planned Budget for 2006/07 (which included Transformation Funding), and the Revenue and Capital Budgets for Children's' Centres for the 2 year financial period 2006/07 – 2007/08.

AGREED **That the planned budget as laid out for:**

- **Part A – where the current budget is, at the end of the Financial Year March 2006;**
- **Part B – The Planned Budget for 2006/07, including the Transformation Fund;**
- **Part C – The Planned Revenue and Capital Budget for Children's' Centres, for 2006 – 2008.**

591. THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE EYDCP

The Partnership considered a brief report from Klaus Wedell and Ros Hatherill about the continuing role of the EYDCP, and its wider role within the Herefordshire Children and Young People's Plan. This included parts of the EYDCP constitution which it had become necessary to revise, in order to bring it up-to-date with current developments, guidance and legislation. Sue Fiennes emphasised that, in her opinion, the EYDCP should continue regardless of any shifts in legislation and guidance arising from the Herefordshire C&YPP. It was possible that the EYDCP would take on a monitoring role, and would act as an interface between Herefordshire Council and other organisations in the Private, Voluntary and Independent sectors.

Klaus Wedell asked members to consider the EYDCP's role in terms of function, membership, and meeting arrangements. They formed discussion groups, and made the following key points:

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Group 1

- **Function:** Need to emphasise consultative role;
A means of disseminating information/marketing tool.
Can use parish newsletters for this, and Herefordshire Matters and Core News;
Reporting role to the Children and Young People's Board/Children's trust. EYDCP could reform any split decisions on particular issues;
Not technically a decision-making body, so we need to look at what we should be making decisions about.
- **Membership:** Should we have a single Rep from Children and Young People's Directorate?
Parent representation is becoming more important. In particular, in October, will be Service Advisory Groups. It will be important to have one Rep from each Parental Advisory Group;
If a Rep does not attend regularly, we need to have a mechanism to request a replacement.
- **Arrangements** Earlier meeting time might be better. Variety of venues is helpful to some who are not Hereford-based.

Group 2

- **Function:** Ensuring quality outcomes for children;
Consultative Role;
Examining processes;
Sharing information. This is a 2-way process between Partnership and all involved organisations;
Link to the Children and Young People's Partnership Board;
Is it time to change the name of EYDCP to make it more appropriate to its function?
- **Membership** Must re-instate the representation that has tailed off, and ensure that people are replaced when they leave.
- **Arrangements** Agenda length is currently prohibiting. Should consider only having one major item. Should also be a wider variety of contributors – maybe a “theme” for every meeting;

Group 3

- **Function** Methods of review – are we doing things the best way?
Some terminology in reports needs reviewing – for example the EYDCP “agrees” Nursery Education Grant, but in reality, it can only “acknowledge” because the decision is taken by another group.
- **Membership** Parental representation required from Children's Centres;
Must ensure that Reps are representing their members properly;

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- Arrangements It is insufficient merely to advertise the dates and times of meetings – instead, EYDCP needs to feed more information to the public about what is happening at meetings and in Children and Young People's Directorate in general.

AGREED: that:

- (i) the above comments be considered in discussion with Sue Fiennes, in order to update the function, membership, and meeting arrangements of the EYDCP; and**
- (ii) any changes to the EYDCP constitution be notified to and approved by Council where necessary.**

592. CHILDMINDING SUB-GROUP

Alison Murphy reported on a proposal to adopt the existing Childminding Steering Group as a formal Sub-Group of the EYDCP. The steering group had been set up in 2001/02, to support the partnership between the EYDCP and the National Childminding Association (NCMA). Since its inception, its membership had grown, training and development had increased, and the Childminding Team's range of work and professional services had expanded to such an extent that there was merit in making the steering group a formal sub-group of the EYDCP. This would ensure that it had strong reporting lines to both the EYDCP and the Policy and Finance Sub-Group.

In addition, members also felt that the group's membership should be further expanded to take account of the Children's Centres and Extended Schools agenda, and to reflect the diversity of the EYDCP.

AGREED: That

- (i) the Childminding Steering Group becomes a formal Sub-Group of the EYDCP, with membership reflecting the diversity of services represented; and**
- (ii) the EYDCP notes the considerable achievements of the Childminding Team and of Herefordshire's childminders in general (evidenced by OFSTED reports), the growth in the Network, and the significant rise in the take-up of professional development and qualification training.**

593. REQUEST FOR RECEIPT OF NURSERY EDUCATION FUND

Sue Peasgood reported on two requests for receipt of Nursery Education Funding (NEF), from Putson Pre-School Nursery and Little Acorns. Both settings had been registered by OFSTED, were fully operational and had agreed to the terms and conditions required for the funding. Little Acorns was an existing Neighbourhood Nursery which had expanded to a new full day care provision; Putson Pre-School was a completely new setting.

Bryan Twitty pointed out that, in general, the EYDCP was not the approving

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body for NEF funding; rather, its role was to acknowledge that the settings in question had agreed to abide by the rules and policies set out by the EYDCP. Sheila Dunsford said that the EYDCP had the power to agree to withdraw NEF under certain circumstances, however (when a setting became inadequate), and that a paper on this subject would be issued in due course.

AGREED: that:

- (i) Putson Pre-School and Little Acorns new provision be included in the Herefordshire Directory of Providers in order to receive Nursery Education Funding from September 2006; and**
- (ii) The EYDCP considers the paper on NEF funding at a future meeting.**

594. TRANSFORMATION FUND

Alison Murphy provided information on the Transformation Fund and its implications for Herefordshire's childcare workforce. The fund was new, and had been allocated from the Government to assist long-term transformation of the quality of childcare without compromising its affordability. The Fund was to be spent on Early Years provision. The Fund would be available until 2008 initially, to establish approaches to workforce development, and to help inform future policy decisions. Specifically, the Fund would support the transformation of quality in early years settings by:

- Establishing training routes for a new graduate-level status of "Early Years Professional";
- Providing finance for staff wishing to train as Early Years Professionals;
- Supporting progress towards the Government's objective of having an Early Years Professional in all full daycare settings by 2015;
- Boosting the qualifications of staff in Private, Voluntary and Independent settings (particularly by achieving more Level 3 Qualifications and training more staff to work with children with disabilities SEN.

The funding allocation for Herefordshire was £187,559. Alison Murphy had asked the DfES to clarify its rationale, particularly because it wanted to assess Herefordshire's spend as early as September 2006, and she was concerned that this would give a false picture because most early years activity only started in September.

In addition, Alison Murphy reported that Herefordshire was piloting an Early Years Professional Status scheme, and there was a consultation about this in the Council's website.

Members noted that there would be a further report on the Transformation Fund after the allocations had begun.

AGREED: that:

- (i) the EYDCP acknowledges the new, ringfenced funding stream, called the Transformation Fund, which aims to raise the quality of Early Years provision; and**

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- (ii) **a progress report on the Transformation Fund be considered at a future EYDCP meeting.**

595. EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

Sue Peasgood reported on a public consultation for the proposed Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS). The new EYFS would cover the period from birth to the end of the academic year in which children become 5 years old. It would bring together the current "Birth to Three Matters Framework", the "Curriculum Guidance to the Foundation Stage", and elements of the "National Standards for Under 8s Daycare and Childminding". It would thereby create a single framework set in the context of Every Child Matters.

Alongside these proposals, there would also be a review of the National Literacy and Numeracy Foundation Stages. The aim of the proposed changes was to deliver improved outcomes for all children across every area of learning and development. There would be a continued emphasis on high quality interactive play, and on the Early Learning Goals.

The consultation would take place during summer 2006, up until 28 July. Comments could be made through the DfES website, or by telephoning the DfES on a dedicated number. Sue emphasised the importance of expressing views on the proposals, and said that she would write to all settings and schools to alert them to the consultation.

Following the consultation, training for the new EYFS would begin in 2007, and it would become statutory in September 2008.

AGREED: that the EYDCP notes the introduction of the proposed Early Years Foundation Stage, and notes the importance of EYDCP members and Herefordshire early years practitioners responding to the formal consultation during summer 2006.

596. QUARTERLY CHILDCARE REPORT

The Partnership noted progress made against childcare targets in the Two-Year Plan (2004-2006), for disadvantaged and non-disadvantaged wards. The report covered Period 4 of 2005/06, and indicated that the targets set at the beginning of the period would be met.

During the course of the 2-year period, the DfES had removed the stipulation, and funding constraints, placed on the EYDCP regarding place creation within disadvantaged areas. This meant that the available funding could then be used to support settings anywhere in Herefordshire. The definition of a disadvantaged area also changed, and "Super Output Areas" became the new measure; a move that significantly altered area boundaries. These two factors combined made the tracking of disadvantaged areas irrelevant.

Bryan Twitty reported that only the total overall number of places created was now tracked. This had to be offset against the number of closed places

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in order to get the true picture of how many new places had been created. He added that there was no longer a national requirement to report the ratio of places closed to places opened.

AGREED: that:

- (i) the progress made with targets over the period 2004-2006, be noted, and**
- (ii) it be noted that the EYDCP has no set targets for the forthcoming period, other than the creation of Children's Centre childcare.**

597. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None.

598. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

Members noted the following dates of EYDCP meetings:

- **12 October 2006** (venue tba – Ros Hatherill would explore possible venues, and if none were viable, the meeting would take place at the Education and Conference Centre, Blackfriars)
- **07 December 2006** (venue tba)

The meeting ended at 8.59 p.m.

CHAIRMAN