

# EPHING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MINUTES

**Committee:** Overview and Scrutiny Committee      **Date:** Tuesday, 4 June 2013

**Place:** Council Chamber, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping      **Time:** 7.30 - 9.50 pm

**Members Present:** Councillors R Morgan (Chairman) K Chana, T Church, Mrs T Cochrane, L Girling, D Jacobs, Ms H Kane, Mrs J Lea, A Lion, A Mitchell MBE, S Murray, J Philip, B Rolfe, A Watts and D Wixley

**Other Councillors:** Councillors K Avey, Mrs A Grigg, Ms G Shiell, D Stallan, Ms S Stavrou, G Waller, Mrs E Webster, C Whitbread, Mrs J H Whitehouse, J M Whitehouse and J Wyatt

**Apologies:** Councillors K Angold-Stephens, G Chambers and P Keska

**Officers Present:** D Macnab (Deputy Chief Executive), C O'Boyle (Director of Corporate Support Services), I Willett (Assistant to the Chief Executive), J Chandler (Assistant Director (Community Services and Customer Relations)), S G Hill (Senior Democratic Services Officer), T Carne (Public Relations and Marketing Officer), A Hendry (Democratic Services Officer) and M Jenkins (Democratic Services Assistant)

**By Invitation:** J Boyd (Essex County Council)

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## 1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the Internet, and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

## 2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

It was noted that Councillor Mrs J Lea was substituting for Councillor P Keska, Councillor T Cochrane was substituting for Councillor K Angold-Stephens and Councillor A Watts was substituting for Councillor G Chambers.

## 3. MINUTES

### RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 9 April 2013 be agreed.

## 4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

## 5. PRESENTATION ON CHILDREN SERVICES AND CORPORATE PARENTING

The Committee welcomed Jenny Boyd, the Director of Local Delivery West, Children's Social Care at Essex County Council. She was there to talk about Corporate Parenting and Children Services, what corporate parenting was and just what was a members responsibility in relation to it. She started by quoting Frank Dobson from a letter he wrote in 1998 that "for children who are looked after, your council has a legal and moral duty to try to provide the kind of loyal support that any good parents would give to their children...you should do your utmost to make sure that children in public care get a good start in life..." this was the principal that underlined and still underlined the concept of Corporate Parenting. (The slides of the presentation are attached to these minutes.)

These responsibilities were primarily laid out in the Children Act 1989 and updated and refined in subsequent legislation.

In some circumstances we share parental responsibilities for these children in care and care leavers. Some of the duties and responsibilities on local authorities are for planning, safeguarding, promoting health, wellbeing and life chances. Duties to care leavers extend to at least age 21. A lot of what was done was measured by performance indicators.

Councillors need to be aware of the corporate parenting role and the shared responsibility for ensuring that the needs of children are met. They also need to understand the impact of council decisions on children in care and care leavers and to ensure that action was taken to address any shortcomings.

There were two main categories of public care, 'Accommodated' at the request of parents and/or young person; or subject to a Care Order (by order of a court under section 31, Children Act 1989). At 16 or 17 young people can ask to go into care or to come out off care and this would override the wishes of parents. The courts would have to decide on any Care Orders made.

There were various reason why young people were in care, the primary reason being abuse or neglect, followed by problems in the family such a family being acute stress or absent parents or a parents illness or disability. Last on the list of reasons and accounting for only a small percentage (2%) of looked after children would be a child's socially unacceptable behaviour.

The cost of getting this wrong would result in poor educational performance, contact with the criminal justice system, poor physical and mental health, homelessness and/or unemployment. All at a huge cost financially to the state.

Children in care needs someone who cares for them and believes in them; they need stability, security and continuity of support. The support services need to promote resilience and not just fix what was broken but nurture what was best. They should ensure that young people become employable and that on leaving care have access to safe, permanent, suitable accommodation. Essex County Council aimed to provide early, targeted help, effecting change to enable children to be brought up safely and healthily in their own families. However, they also wished to provide and commission high quality substitute care within family settings, as near to home as possible, maintaining links with the birth family whenever this was in the child's best interest. Also, where it was appropriate to provide high quality residential care. They also aimed to support children in care and care leavers and to work respectfully with children and their families and involve them in the future design and improvement of their services. They would like EFDC and key partner agencies to help and support

the development of work experience opportunities for young people in care and care leavers within the EFDC area. They would like them to support the development of apprenticeships and employment opportunities, support requests for foster carers being seen as a priority housing group, provide free access to leisure facilities to children in care and care leavers and to promote fostering for Essex CC at a local level. Councillors should champion children and care leavers at every opportunity. They should also remember that when corporate parenting clashes with other responsibilities, councillors should remember the principle "if this were my child".

The meeting was then opened out to questions from members.

Councillor Wixley commented that the Children's Centre in Lawton Road, Loughton did excellent work with young families in a deprived area. Were you hoping to provide an alternative service in future with reduced funding?

Ms Boyd replied that the services had been absorbed into another children's centre. She did not have the details with her but she would provide a more detailed response after the meeting. Councillor Wixley asked if she could also describe the services provided in her response. Councillor Murray asked if she could also indicate exactly where this alternative provision was being provided.

Councillor Lea said that 'Homestart' was a highly valued service working, she believe, nationwide. Our local service had helped many young families, often single parents without any other means of support, to turn their lives around. 'Homestart' has had County and District Council support in the past but was also heavily dependent on volunteers and local fund-raising. Evidence was that demand for such help was increasing at an alarming rate. Failure to provide that support would lead to more intervention being required from Social Services, Housing Services and the welfare system which would probably prove even more costly. Can we be reassured that support for 'Homestart' would continue?

Ms Boyd said that she would get a detailed response back to this meeting. She understood that money had been made available but that 'Homestart' had not applied for this. This was because they would have to widen their terms of reference to include the over fives, which they were working on now.

Councillor Kane asked that in contrast to 'Homestart' could you confirm that the 'Surestart' centres will continue to be funded to an adequate level?

Ms Boyd noted that they had children centres in place and they would continue to be funded. She would provide a fuller reply at a later date.

Councillor Rolfe asked how did her services relate to those with those of the Youth service and Education? Did she work collaboratively? Whilst the needs of various age groups were different, was there an overlap in provision at a particular age, or alternatively a gap in provision, and were you able to share resources?

Ms Boyd replied that they did work collaboratively and wanted to share resources in a climate when funding was becoming more constrained. In terms of Children's Social Care a lot of the work was going on including youth and health and education. Also there was a new Family Solutions Service that was coming on stream in October, when Children Social Care were setting up an early family intervention service. That will be a multi-disciplinary service working on providing early help to families in this district as well as Brentwood.

Councillor Mitchell asked how she saw the future of Children's Services in a climate of reducing budgets?

Ms Boyd said that they had a responsibility to look at the services they provided. They have no choice but to provide a lot of their services. Essex County Council was currently reviewing their services in this period of budget reduction over the next three years. She added that their relationship with all the district's were crucial in the regard of partnership working.

Councillor Girling said that the Loughton Centre for young people would like a base for office space so that they could offer more services; how would ECC view this? Ms Boyd said she did not know but would find out and would get back to the councillor.

Councillor Lion asked if Ms Boyd could relate Corporate Parenting to something more practical and how this would work in practice. Ms Boyd said the basic responsibility to keep in mind was that children being looked after was something that you could affect and do something for them. Look for opportunities to help care leavers. Keep them in mind all the time. Raise your awareness of them and pass it on to others you deal with.

Councillor Murray said that he may have misunderstood but thought that the council had a scheme to provide a number of units around the district for secure one bedroom accommodation. Ms Boyd agreed that there was a scheme in place, but she was talking about access to long term accommodation. Councillor Stallan, the Portfolio Holder for Housing, said that they had a new housing allocations scheme which had these people as a priority. Ms Boyd replied it was fine to have them as a priority but they would have to complete with the other priority groups. She would like to see them have three allocations per year in this district as standard. Councillor Stallan asked that she email him so they could look at this.

The Chairman thanked Ms Boyd for her interesting presentation and hoped that she could come back in a years time and update the Committee.

*\*Please note that subsequent to the meeting Ms Boyd had supplied fuller answers to some of the questions that she could not answer at the meeting. These are attached to these minutes as an appendix.*

## **6. CABINET REVIEW**

The Committee noted the Cabinet agenda of 10 June. Councillor Murray was pleased to see item 11 of the agenda, the 'acceptance of tender – replacement kitchens to council owned dwellings'. This was a good report and should be endorsed.

Councillor Philip said he would like to encourage the Cabinet on agenda item 10, 'Local Plan Issues and Options – responses to community choices'. There had been a lot of input from his residents and it was important that the council provided a clear and accessible report to the residents as soon as possible.

## **7. FINAL REPORT OF THE SENIOR RECRUITMENT REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL**

The Committee received the final report of the Senior Recruitment Review Task and Finish Panel. In the absence of the Chairman of the Panel the report was introduced by the Director of Corporate Support Services, Colleen O'Boyle. The Committee noted that the review had been set up to look at the recruitment processes and to recommend any modifications to future processes that might be necessary. They

reviewed feedback received on the process from candidates, the Appointments Committee and the Council's consultants. Generally, the Appointments Panel, Candidates and Consultants were happy with venues, the interview processes and the appointed consultants. Their recommendations reflected on the future use of external venues and interview/exercise structure. No further recommendations were thought necessary for this element of the process. Their main recommendations related to guidance and checklist for future recruitment processes.

Recommendation 3 (d) was so worded to comply with the Council's new employment procedure rules.

The Committee noted some minor wording amendments to the recruitment check list that:

- Under the third bullet point to delete the word 'of' and replace it with 'or' so it should read "Theses may include some **or** all of:";
- Under the fourth sub bullet point of the third bullet point to delete 'and how' at the end of that point.

Councillor Philip asked that recommendation 3(a) be amended to include the word 'normally' so that it read:

- (a) Where appropriate, **normally** external recruitment advice should be procured on a competitive basis for senior positions;

This was to strengthen the recommendation and put the onus on the panel to say why they would not want to do this. This was agreed by the committee.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That Council agree clear Terms of Reference for the Appointment Committee, in every senior management appointment process;
- (2) That the proposed checklist be approved and included in the Senior Management Appointment Guidance Notes; and
- (3) That the following key elements be included in the accompanying Guidance Notes and agreed for future senior recruitment exercises:
  - (a) Where appropriate, normally external recruitment advice should be procured on a competitive basis for senior positions;
  - (b) The early appointment of a legal advisor to the recruitment process, whether internal or from an appropriate external source;
  - (c) Contracts of employment should be drafted with legal advice at the earliest possible stage of recruitment and before a provisional offer was made, such contracts to conform to a standard form but reflecting, where necessary, any specific requirements of the Authority;
  - (d) That for recruitment to the posts of Chief Executive, Deputy Chief Executive, Service Directors and equivalent Chief Officer positions (as defined in the Employment Procedure Rules of the Constitution) created by the Council in the future, the following be authorised to agree a starting date and agree any other detailed terms in the contract as may arise, subject to legal advice from a nominated employment law specialist, namely:

- (i) Chief Executive – Chairman of Appointing Panel and Leader of Council;
  - (ii) All other posts as defined above - the Chairman of the Recruitment/Appointment Panel, Leader of the Council and Head of Paid Service
- (e) Where an appointment was made by Council, a transparent approach should be taken and the provisional appointee named in the report to Council subject to:
- (i) The agreement of the applicant at the time of disclosure,
  - (ii) The current employer (as appropriate) being notified; and
  - (iii) The completion of the Executive objection process set out in the Officer Employment Procedure Rules contained within the Constitution;
- (f) External venues should be used for the recruitment process for senior appointments; and
- (g) Recruitment and selection of candidates should include a wide range of tests and exercises suitable to the post in question.

## **8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2012/13**

The Committee received the amended annual Overview and Scrutiny Report for 2012/13 incorporating comments made at their meeting of 9 April 2013.

Councillor Morgan expressed his thanks to all the Panel Chairman, members and officers for all their hard work during the last year on the various panels.

Councillor Murray thought it was a very good report and wanted to give his thanks to the Housing Panel members and officers, and his special thanks to his vice-Chairman Councillor Mitchell. He thought that the case study was a particularly good example of scrutiny work carried out by the Housing Standing Panel.

The Committee pointed out various amendments and typos in the report to be rectified.

Councillor Philip asked that in future years a short one or two page executive summary should be produced.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Annual Overview and Scrutiny Report for 2012/13 be agreed and submitted to the Full Council at its meeting on 30 July 2013.

## **9. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP TO THE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL**

The Committee considered the membership of the existing Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel. They agreed that as it was still undertaking its work the members should not change to enable them to finish their work.

**RESOLVED:**

That the existing membership of the Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel be re-appointed.

**10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REVIEW TASK AND FINISH PANEL**

The Assistant to the Chief Executive, Ian Willett introduced a report outlining the draft recommendations made by the Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel so far.

Councillor Morgan asked why they were recommending that outside organisations should be situated in the well of the chamber and not at the top table. Mr Willett said this was modelled on the parliamentary scrutiny system, everyone on the same level so that they did not look down on members.

Councillor Murray endorsed this recommendation saying that where you sat was important. This had worked at the Housing Scrutiny Panel when they had this type of meeting in the Council Chamber. He noted that the public already the ability to ask questions at meetings, but only with the Chairman's discretion. As for having the Tenants Federation going on the Scrutiny Training, he had no problem with it being partly funded by the HRA.

Councillor Philip asked that if a call-in was retracted (as indicated in recommendation 5 (f)) would it be reported to Overview and Scrutiny. He was also concerned with 5(g) that would not allow other members, other than the lead member of the call-in not to speak until after the O&S Committee has spoken. Under recommendation 9(b) he raised concerns that members of the public may raise topics that were irrelevant to the Panel they were addressing, also, could a member of the public ask for items to be raised at O&S? Mr Willett agreed and said the Panel would be looking into this in detail.

The Task and Finish Panel would report to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and then on to full Council.

Councillor Watts commented that O&S was an essential element of the governance process of the Council. A lot of the items discussed here would be of interest to the Audit and Governance Committee; could they receive the report of the Task and Finish Panel as well as O&S. Mr Willett said that as part of the consultation process they would consult Audit and Governance.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee noted the interim report of the Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel.

**11. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERSHIP TO STANDING PANELS**

The Committee were asked to make appointments to Standing Panels in accordance with the Overview and Scrutiny rules. The Committee were reminded that the Council had agreed pro rata applied to Standing Panels and that membership should be kept to a minimum to allow each Group to have representation. It was noted that on this

basis it had been agreed by group leaders that Panels would consist of 11 Members, including any independent member that wished to be a member of a Panel.

It was reported that nominations to Chairman and Vice Chairman to Standing Panels were excluded from the pro rata calculation rules required for such positions contained in the Council's constitution.

**RESOLVED:**

That the appointments to Standing Panels annexed to these minutes be adopted.

**12. WORK PROGRAMME MONITORING**

**a) Work Programme**

The Committee considered their work programme for the coming year. They noted that the Standing Panels would be agreeing their work programmes at their first meetings.

**O&S Work Programme**

The Committee agreed:

- 1) To have the Local Strategic Partnership go to the July meeting.
- 2) Items 11 and 12 review of the PCT/West Essex Health Service and the Mental Health Services in the District to combine and hopefully have them to the September meeting.

**(b) New Year's Work Programme**

The Committee agreed:

- 1) To receive a presentation from the local Citizen Advice Bureau and to focus on –
  - their general services,
  - funding from this Council,
  - the impact of recent Welfare and Budget changes, and
  - accommodation issues here in Epping and how we could help them.
- 2) That the request from Councillor Kane for scrutiny to look at unauthorised parking on Housing owned grass verges should go to the Housing Services Scrutiny Standing Panel.
- 3) That the request from Councillor Jennie Hart for scrutiny to consider the difficulties this council encounters when improvements to communal areas of flat blocks should also go to the Housing Services Scrutiny Standing Panel.
- 4) That the request from the full Council that Scrutiny undertake a review of the process for the nomination to and appointment of, the Vice Chairman of Council. The Committee agreed that this should be considered by the Constitution and Member Services Standing Panel.

**CHAIRMAN**

# *'If this were my child...'*

## - the role of district councillors in corporate parenting

Jenny Boyd  
Director of Local Delivery West  
Children's Social Care



## What is corporate parenting?

*“For children who are looked after, your council has a legal and moral duty to try to provide the kind of loyal support that any good parents would give to their children....you should do your utmost to make sure that children in public care get a good start in life....”*

Letter from Frank Dobson, Secretary of State for Health sent to all councillors in 1998

# Legal and policy context

Corporate parenting responsibilities reiterated in subsequent legislation and statutory guidance:

- **Children Act 1989 remains the underpinning legislation**
- Children Leaving Care Act 2000
- Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Children Act 2004
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010

***“Stable placements, good health and support during transition are all essential elements, but children will only achieve their potential through the ambition and high expectation of all those involved in their lives.”***

## Responsibilities of the local authority for children in care and care leavers

- Extensive legal and statutory powers, duties and responsibilities on local authorities for planning, safeguarding, promoting health, wellbeing and life chances
- Includes sharing parental responsibility in some circumstances
- Duties to care leavers extend to at least age 21
- Backed up by raft of performance indicators

# Responsibilities of all councillors

- Awareness of corporate parenting role and shared responsibility for ensuring needs of children are met
- Awareness of profile and needs of children in care in the authority
- Understanding the impact of council decisions on children in care and care leavers
- Receive information about quality of care and services for children in care and care leavers
- Ensure action being taken to address any shortcomings
- Champion the needs of children in care and care leavers in their area

# Being in care

Two main categories of public care:

- “Accommodated” at the request of parents and/or young person (Section 20, Children Act 1989)
- Subject to a Care Order (by order of a court under Section 31, Children Act 1989)

# Why are children in care?

Reason	Percent
Abuse or neglect	62%
Problems in family functioning	14%
Family in acute stress	9%
Absent parents	5%
Parents illness or disability	4%
Child's disability	3%
Child's socially unacceptable behaviour	2%

# Why does it matter?

The cost of getting it wrong:

- Poor educational performance
- Contact with criminal justice system
- Poor physical and mental health
- Homelessness
- Unemployment
- Difficulty in future relationships and parenting
- Risk of further abuse

= huge cost to the individual

= potential huge cost financially to the state

= poor inspection outcomes for the local authority



# What helps children and young people do well in care?

- Someone who cares for them, believes in them and sticks by them
- Stability, including of high quality care placements
- Security
- Continuity of support
- Support services to promote resilience and capacity:  
“not just fixing what is broken but nurturing what is best”
- Listening to what children and young people are saying
- Ensuring young people are becoming employable
- Ensuring young people leaving care have access to safe, permanent, suitable accommodation

# Our vision for children in care in Essex

- Provide early, targeted help, effecting change to enable children to be brought up safely and healthily in their own families...
- Provide assessment, support and advice to families and where necessary safeguard children whose families are unable to provide good enough care
- Provide and commission high quality substitute care within family settings, as near to home as possible and maintaining links with the birth family whenever this is in the child's best interests
- Where family based placements are not appropriate, provide high quality residential care
- Support children in care and care leavers to achieve and succeed
- Work respectfully with children and their families and involve them in the future design and improvement of our services

# The Epping picture

Number of children in care from Epping district	41
Number per 10,000 of child population	16
Number of these placed in Epping district	5
Number of children in care to Essex CC placed in Epping district	29
Number of foster carers in Epping district	12
Number of priority housing nominations for care leavers across all district councils in Essex	35
Number of housing nominations in Epping district for care leavers	0
Percentage of care leavers in West Essex not in education, training or employment	34%

# What can you do to help?

- Help or support the development of work experience opportunities for young people in care and care leavers within Epping DC and key partner agencies
- Help or support the development of apprenticeships and employment opportunities
- Support/request access to priority nominations for care leavers in Epping district
- Support/request foster carers being seen as a priority housing group
- Provide free access to leisure facilities to children in care and care leavers
- Promote fostering for Essex CC at a local level
- Champion children and care leavers at every opportunity

## Key points to remember

- Corporate parenting is not the same as “ordinary” parenting, it carries different responsibilities **BUT**....
- When corporate parenting clashes with other responsibilities of councillors remember the principle “if this were my child”
- Looked after children are entitled to privacy
- Corporate parents have a duty to question and challenge aspects of the service to children looked after
- Corporate parents must recognise the complexity of caring for children looked after – there are not always easy solutions

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## **Answers to Questions put to Jenny Boyd that could not be answered on the night.**

“Please see below responses to the questions posed before the meeting and the one additional one that I received at the meeting itself. If I’ve missed any please let me know.”

*Jenny Boyd*

**Q1.** The Children's Centre in Lawton Road, Loughton was doing excellent work with young families in a deprived area. Are you hoping to provide an alternative service in future with reduced funding?

**Answer:** *Little Oaks Children's Centre relocated from Lawton Road (co-located with the Loughton Family Centre) to Torrington Drive (co-located with the Loughton Resource Centre/Essex Cares) in September 2012. This relocation was driven by the ECC property transformation strategy. The centre continues to serve the same reach area, and was inspected by Ofsted in March 2013. The centre received an overall 'Satisfactory' outcome, with elements of 'Good'. Strengths included safeguarding and the positive relationships between staff and the most vulnerable families.*

*Under the current contract with Spurgeons (from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2012 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2014), all the children's centres in West Essex have a target of reaching 80% of families with children under 5 in their reach area and with providing further targeted and/or 1:1 support to families, based on identified need. The re-location, and subsequent disruption to services while the new building was made fit for purpose did result in a decline in the number of families registered with and accessing services from the centre. Currently Little Oaks is reaching 54% of families (against a quadrant average of 66%), giving it the 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest reach in the Epping Forest District [data taken from Quarter 4 KPI submission, April 2013]. The centre was given an Amber rating at its annual review in January 2013. Actions from both the annual review and Ofsted inspection are being monitored and reviewed regularly by ECC. The number of families receiving services from the centre is now increasing, with 1:1 targeted work with families being co-ordinated by the Senior Family Support Worker across the Epping Forest District.*

**Q2.** Homestart is a highly valued service working, I believe, nationwide. Our local service has helped many young families, often single parents without any other means of support, to turn their lives around. Homestart has had County and District Council support in the past but is also heavily dependent on volunteers and local fund-raising. Evidence is that demand for such help is increasing at an alarming rate. Failure to provide that support will lead to more intervention being required from Social Services, Housing services and the welfare system which would probably prove even more costly. Can we be re-assured that support for Homestart will continue?

**Answer:** *Funding for services for the under 5s is now via the Children's Centre contracts. The Family Innovation Fund is for commissioning services for the over 5s. Other Homestart organisations were funded through FIF by submitting bids for adapting*

*their work to include work with over 5's. Homestart Epping did not submit a bid for this funding.*

*ECC and Spurgeons met with the Homestarts in Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford in February 2013 to agree a process/protocol for ensuring families continue to be supported through changes in Homestart funding. It was confirmed that the children's centres would have the capacity to work with any families with children under 5 that require support, based on identified need. A process was agreed between Homestart and Spurgeons for referral from Homestart to the children's centres of families wanting this. This is co-ordinated at a district level for Spurgeons by the Senior Family Support Worker. To date 9 families in Epping Forest have been consulted by Homestart and asked whether they would like to receive support from a children's centre. 8 families chose not to take up this offer of support.*

**Q3.** In contrast to Homestart can you confirm that the Surestart centres will continue to be funded to an adequate level?

**Answer:** *Work is currently underway to review the Children's Centre budget and required level of service delivery. It is not possible to give these assurances until this work is completed, however Children's Centre delivery does remain a priority for ECC*

**Q4.** How do your services relate to those with those of the Youth service and Education? Do you work collaboratively? Whilst the needs of various age groups are different, is there an overlap in provision at a particular age, or alternatively a gap in provision, and are you able to share resources?

**Answer:** *We view collaborative working with our key partners (including youth services and education) as an absolute priority. This has always been the case to ensure consistency, lack of duplication and clear communication in working with vulnerable families and young people but has become even more pertinent in a context of austerity, localism and reduced public sector budgets. An example of this collaborative working has been the secondment of Targeted Youth Advisers employed by the Youth Service into Leaving Care Teams across the county. These workers work with the most vulnerable young people in and leaving care to increase their chances of entering work or education. We also use district based Youth Centres to run groups for young people in and leaving care, which helps these young people to become integrated into mainstream Youth provision.*

**Q5.** How do you see the future of Childrens Services in a climate of reducing budgets?

**Answer:** *We have very challenging times ahead, with significant savings to be made over the next 3 years across the council. We have embarked on a very ambitious re-structuring and re-design of all our services in order to achieve this whilst still ensuring that we met the needs of the most vulnerable children and families in our*

*communities. One of the ways in which we are doing this is to establish Family Solutions Services in each part of the county. In West one team has already been established in Harlow. From October 2013 the remit of these teams will expand, to provide a multi-disciplinary early help service across all districts. We will be establishing a second team to serve both Epping Forest and Brentwood districts. In order to make sure we continue to provide the most responsive and effective service in this challenging climate our partnerships at a district level are absolutely crucial.*

\*An additional question was asked at the meeting about use of Youth Centre facilities in West by other groups. I am directing that question at the relevant manager for the Youth Service and will come back to you when I receive a response.

Jenny Boyd  
Director of Local Delivery West  
Children's Social Care

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## Task and Finish Panel Membership

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### Overview and Scrutiny Review

<b>Membership 2013/14</b>
<b>Chairman: K Angold-Stephens</b>
<b>Vice Chairman: R Gadsby</b>
K Angold-Stephens (LRA) R Gadsby (Con) A Grigg (Con) M Sartin (Con) D Stallan (Con) JH Whitehouse (LibDem)

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## Agreed Scrutiny Panels Membership for 2013/14

### Standing Panels

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#### Constitution and Member Services Panel

**Chairman: J Philip**

**Vice Chairman: A Watts**

**Conservative Group:**

R Gadsby, M McEwen, J Philip, M Sartin, D Stallan, G Waller and A Watts

**Liberal Democrats Group:**

J H Whitehouse

**LRA Group:**

R Cohen; C Pond

**Other Nominations:**

R Morgan

#### Finance and Performance Management

**Chairman – A Lion**

**Vice Chairman: R Gadsby**

**Conservative Group:**

T Church, R Gadsby, J Knapman, A Lion, G Mohindra, S Watson and J Wyatt

**Liberal Democrats Group:**

D Jacobs

**LRA Group:**

K Angold-Stephens, C Finn

## Housing

**Chairman: S Murray**

**Vice Chairman: G Shiell**

**Conservative Group:**

K Avey, K Chana, R Gadsby, J Lea, S Jones, B Rolfe and G Shiell

**Liberal Democrats Group:**

J H Whitehouse

**LRA Group:**

Jennie Hart, L Leonard

**Other Nominations:**

S Murray

## Safer, Cleaner, Greener

**Chairman: J Lea**

**Vice Chairman: H Brady**

**Conservative Group:**

K Avey, H Brady, G Chambers, Y Knight, J Lea, Mrs M Sartin and P Smith

**Liberal Democrats Group:**

P Spencer

**LRA Group:**

T Cochrane, L Girling

**Other Nomination:**

S Murray, R Butler

## Planning Services

**Chairman: J Wyatt**

**Vice-Chairman: G Chambers**

**Conservative Group:**

A Boyce, G Chambers, K Chana, J Hart, P Keska, B Sandler and J Wyatt

**Liberal Democrats Group:**

J M Whitehouse

**LRA Group:**

T Thomas, D Wixley

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