

# Merton Council Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel



Date: Tuesday 11 January 2011  
Time: 7.15 p.m.  
Venue: Committee Rooms B and C,  
Merton Civic Centre, London Road,  
Morden SM4 5DX

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## SUPPLEMENTARY AGENDA

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| 9. | Provision for vulnerable young people excluded from or not participating in school - Task Group Update | 21 |
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**This is a public meeting – members of the public are very welcome to attend.  
The meeting room will be open to members of the public from 7.00 p.m.**

For more information about the agenda and the decision-making process, contact Democratic Services Officer, on 020 8545 3 or e-mail [democratic.services@merton.gov.uk](mailto:democratic.services@merton.gov.uk). Further information about Merton Council can be found at [www.merton.gov.uk](http://www.merton.gov.uk)

For more information about the work of this and other overview and scrutiny panels, please contact Hilary Gullen, Scrutiny Officer, on 020 8545 4035 or e-mail [hilary.gullen@merton.gov.uk](mailto:hilary.gullen@merton.gov.uk). Alternatively, visit [www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny)

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## Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel Membership

### Full Members:

Councillor Dennis Pearce (Chair)  
Councillor Simon Withey (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Agatha Akyigyina  
Councillor Laxmi Attawar  
Councillor Iain Dysart  
Councillor Karin Forbes  
Councillor Richard Hilton  
Councillor James Holmes  
Councillor Philip Jones  
Councillor Krystal Miller

### Substitute Members:

Councillor Richard Chellew  
Councillor Gam Gurung  
Councillor Peter McCabe  
Councillor John Sargeant  
Councillor Miles Windsor

### **Statutory Co-opted Members (with voting rights on education matters):**

Mr Andrew Boxall (Parent Governor Representative)  
Mr Ravi Kurup (Parent Governor Representative)  
Colin Powell (Church of England Diocesan Representative)  
Mrs Anna Juster (Roman Catholic Diocesan Representative)

### **Non Statutory Co-opted Representatives (with no voting rights):**

Julia Waters (Secondary Headteacher representative)  
Vacancy (Primary Headteacher representative)  
(Members of the Youth Parliament)  
Vacancy (Youth Forum)

### Note1: Declarations of interest

Councillors and co-opted members who have a personal or prejudicial interest in relation to any item on this agenda are asked to complete a declaration form and hand it to the Democratic Services Officer. Forms, together with a summary of guidance on making declarations of interest, will be available around the meeting table. If further clarification is needed members are advised to refer to "The Code of Conduct – Guide for members May 2007" issued by Standards for England, which will be available at the meeting if needed.

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## **What is Overview and Scrutiny?**

Overview and Scrutiny describes the way Merton's scrutiny councillors hold the Council's Executive (the Cabinet) to account to make sure that they take the right decisions for the Borough. The scrutiny panels also carry out reviews of Council services or issues to identify ways the Council can improve or develop new policy to meet the needs of local people.

Scrutiny panels need the help of local people, partners and community groups to make sure that Merton delivers effective services. If you think there is something that scrutiny should look at or if you have views on the current reviews being carried out by scrutiny, let us know.

For more information, please contact the Scrutiny Team on 020 8545 3857 or by e-mail on [scrutiny@merton.gov.uk](mailto:scrutiny@merton.gov.uk). Alternatively, visit [www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny](http://www.merton.gov.uk/scrutiny).

# Committee: Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Panel

**Date: 11 January 2011**

Agenda item: 9

Wards: All

Subject: Provision for vulnerable young people excluded from or not participating in school - Task Group Update

Lead officer: Julia Regan, Scrutiny Officer

Lead member: Councillor James Holmes, Task Group Chair

Forward Plan reference number: n/a

Contact officer: Stella Akintan Scrutiny Officer, [stella.akintan@merton.gov.uk](mailto:stella.akintan@merton.gov.uk)

**Reason for Urgency:** The Chair has approved the submission of this item as a matter of urgency in order to fulfil the Panel's wish to monitor the progress of the task group review.

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## Recommendations:

- A. The Panel are asked to note the progress of this review and make comments and suggestions about the work undertaken thus far.

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## 1 PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1. To update Panel members with the progress of this task group review

## 2 DETAILS

At the beginning the municipal year 2010/2011, The Children and Young People Panel agreed to commission a task group looking at Provision for vulnerable young people excluded from or not participating in school. The scope of the work is attached at

### Appendix A

- 2.1 Keith Shipman, Head of Education and Inclusion was appointed by the Councils' Children Schools and Families Department as expert support to the task group. The task group met with Mr Shipman who gave an overview of the main issues in regards to young people not participating in education in Merton.
- 2.2 Early in October, Cllr Nick Draper stepped down as chair of the task group. It was agreed at the Children and Young People's Panel Meeting on the 11<sup>th</sup> November that he would be replaced by Councillor James Holmes. At this point it became clear that the task group will not be able to complete this review by the end of the municipal year as original hoped. A more realistic deadline has now been set for June/July 2011.

On the 14<sup>th</sup> December the task group met with Head teachers from Melrose school and the Smart Centre to discuss school exclusions in Merton.

- 2.3 As a result of the meetings held so far, a number of issues have began to emerge which the task group will explore in more detail over the next few months:
- 2.4 Although permanent exclusions in Merton have come down in recent years there are high levels of fixed term exclusions and persistent absentees. There are a number of options available to schools with pupils who face exclusions such as alternative education providers or in house programmes.
- 2.5 The task group could usefully look at the co-ordination between schools and alternative education providers and how they work together to reintegrate pupils back into the school.
- 2.6 There are a number of programmes developed by schools across Merton to support pupils who face exclusion and this information should be promoted and shared across all schools in the borough
- 2.7 Alternative education can be an expensive option for schools especially as they tend to spot purchase placements. Schools could benefit from joint commissioning whereby they come together to purchase an agreed number of places a year, rather than the current piecemeal approach.

### **3 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS**

- 3.1. None in relation to this report

### **4 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN OR PROPOSED**

- 4.1. Proposed consultation is set out in the task group scope

### **5 TIMETABLE**

- 5.1. The task group aims to complete the review by June 2011

### **FINANCIAL, RESOURCE AND PROPERTY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.2. None in relation to this report

### **6 LEGAL AND STATUTORY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1. None in relation to this report

### **7 HUMAN RIGHTS, EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1. None in relation to this report

### **8 CRIME AND DISORDER IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1. None in relation to this report

### **9 RISK MANAGEMENT AND HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

- 9.1. None in relation to this report

### **10 APPENDICES – THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENTS ARE TO BE PUBLISHED WITH THIS REPORT AND FORM PART OF THE REPORT**

- Task Group Scope

### **11 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 11.1.

Title of Review	<b>Provision for vulnerable young people excluded from or not participating in school.</b>
Task Group Members	Cllr Nick Draper (Chair), Cllr Agatha Akyigyina, Cllr James Holmes, Andrew Boxall, Ravid Kurup, Cllr Miles Windsor
Outline purpose of review	The review will focus on primary, secondary and academy school pupils who live in Merton and are out of school due to truancy or persistent fixed term exclusions. Looking at what measures are in place to tackle this and what more can be done.
Expected timescale (number of meetings)	The task group will aim to report before the end of the municipal year.
Terms of Reference	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To investigate the causes of, and interventions to reduce pupil absence from school due to truancy or fixed term exclusions.</li> <li>• To investigate the services available to pupils who are not in school due to persistent truancy or fixed term exclusions.</li> <li>• To make recommendations which reduce the number of pupils absent from school due to truancy and exclusions</li> </ul>
Key areas of enquiry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview of the numbers of pupils not in school, including which wards, gender, ethnicity and recipients of free school meals</li> <li>• What measures the schools and LEA take to avoid exclusions and improve attendance</li> <li>• Why some children misbehave in school, schools behaviour policies and how effective they are</li> <li>• What provision is currently available to children excluded or otherwise absent from school</li> <li>• What best practice in other boroughs looks like</li> <li>• To identify what else needs to be done to help</li> <li>• The role and activities of partners</li> <li>• The role of the council, schools, the police and health partners in identifying vulnerable young people at the earliest possible stage to prevent problems from escalating</li> </ul>
Equalities Impact Assessment	The implication for equalities; (including race, disability, gender& transgender, religion or belief, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, human rights) must be considered at every stage of the review. If any significant issues emerge the scrutiny officer, with guidance from members will undertake a Needs Impact Assessment
How review could be publicised	Advertise in My Merton, newsletters, Scrutiny web page, intranet, internet, letters to schools and councillors, local papers, youth groups
Possible witnesses and sources	Cabinet member for Education, Cabinet Member for

of information/evidence	Children’s Services, Opposition Spokesperson. Headteachers, LEA officers, SENCOs, governors, parents, excluded pupils, youth offending team, Education Welfare Officers, Educational Psychologists, attendance officers, young people excluded. Experts and examples of good practice. Save the Children, National Children’s Homes, Prince’s Trust, Letter to schools and relevant organisations requesting written evidence on this subject area
Potential barriers/risks/constraints	Possible reluctance of parents and young people to be involved – confidentiality will be imperative.
Expected outcomes and how they will be monitored (all linked to Merton’s vision and strategic objectives)	To make recommendations to improve service provision and sharing of best practice. Outcomes to be monitored through cabinet response and accompanying action plan once agreed by Cabinet.
Possible sources of information/evidence	Existing reports and Best practice
Co-option	
Scrutiny team lead	Stella Akintan, Scrutiny Officer
Relevant review officers	Director of Children, Schools and Families Keith Shipman, Education and Youth Inclusion Manager