

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

29 June 2017 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 11.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present:

Mr Blunden	Dr Holt	Mr Marshall	Mr Wickremaratchi
Mr Cloake (Chairman)	Mrs Jones	Mrs Mullins	
Mrs Hall	Ms Lord	Mrs Pendleton	
Mr High (Vice Chairman)	Mr Markwell	Mrs Sparkes	

In attendance by invitation: Mr Burrett (Cabinet Member for Education and Skills) and Mr Hillier (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People).

Apologies: Mrs Bennett and Mrs Le Rossignol. Mr Wickremaratchi left at 12.55 after item 8.

Absent: Mrs Ryan

Declaration of Interests

1. The following personal interests were declared: -

- Mrs Sparkes declared a personal interest in item 8 (Planning School Places) as a governor of Worthing College
- Dr Holt declared a personal interest in item 8 (Planning School Places) as the Director of Education for the Diocese of Chichester
- Ms Lord declared a personal interest in item 8 (Planning School Places) as a parent applying for school places in September
- Mr Marshall declared a personal interest in item 8 (Planning School Places) as a member of Horsham District Council Planning Committee
- Mr Cloake declared a personal interest in item 12 (Outturn Total Performance Monitor 2016/17) as a foster carer and because a family member is a social worker

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

2. Resolved - that the minutes of the meeting held on 9 March 2017 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

Urgent Matters

3. The Chairman told the Committee that the Business Planning Group would consider school funding once the government review on the matter was completed.

Committee Membership

4. Resolved – that the Committee notes the County Council appointments to the Committee.

Terms of Reference

5. Resolved – that the Committee notes its Terms of Reference.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

6. The Committee considered an extract of the Forward Plan for July – October 2017 (copy appended to the signed minutes). The following comments were made:

- Members had concerns over the decision ‘Service provision of the Child and Adolescent mental Health Service for children and young people who pose a risk of sexual harm to others (the Assessment Treatment Service) – request to continue arrangements until 30 March 2018’ and were advised that it was scheduled to be discussed at a future meeting of the Business Planning Group in Autumn 2017
- The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People would like a Member Day on Mental Health issues in February 2018

7. Resolved – That the Committee notes the Forward Plan.

Responses to Recommendations

8. The Committee considered responses from the Member Development Group, the Parliamentary Secretary of State for the School System, the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills and the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Inclusion Team (copies appended to the signed minutes).

9. Resolved that – The Committee notes the responses.

Planning School Places

10. The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education and the Director of Education and Skills (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report was introduced by Graham Olway, Principal Manager - Capital Planning and Projects who told the Committee: -

- The Council worked with a wide range of educational providers including dioceses, academy sponsors and free schools
- Planning places was not just about where children lived, as not all wanted to go to their local school, but included parental preference and housing developments where it had to be estimated how many places would be needed in each district/borough and when
- Over the next 15 years it was thought that 66,000 new homes would be built in the county, which statistically meant 30 places per year group needed per 1,000 homes equating to the equivalent of 33 new primary schools
- Some existing schools could be expanded, but new ones would be required in other areas – the Council would look at getting some schools built by developers instead of receiving s106 (planning obligations under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) money
- The Department for Education (DfE) looked at data then decided how much capital grant to award each authority – West Sussex County Council received around £80m across the 2017/18 – 2019/20 financial years– to put this into context, a new 6 form entry secondary school costs in the region of £25m

- The Council would like to see free schools established where there was a need for places, but it could not dictate this
- If free schools were established where need was already met by existing schools it would mean the existing schools might be at risk of operating below capacity and would be hard to sustain
- The Council was involved in helping find sponsors for academies, but didn't make the final decision on who the sponsors would be
- The Council worked on a 5% buffer margin on school capacity to allow for parental preference and children moving into the area
- A new software projection system implemented in 2016 should help with trends for place need and improve accuracy

11. Summary of responses to Members' questions and comments: -

- The Council hosted a workshop in February 2016 for academy trusts illustrating where there was a need for school places, but the decision where to locate free schoolFree Schools was made by the Regional Schools' Commissioner
- The council would benefit from more discussions with the Regional Schools' Commissioner over the location of new freeSchools
- Local members could help with locations for new schools
- Planning a new school could take up to three years
- Seven free schools were allocated to West Sussex in Wave 12 – there had been 22 applications, including two for special schools which were not amongst the seven selected
- The Council was discussing possible sites with district and borough councils
- The DfE wouldn't expect to open new free schools in temporary accommodation
- There was no certainty that all of the seven new free schoolFree Schools would open – nationally, a lot of money had been spent on failed approved bids
- The School Admission Code decided how places are offered – adjustments have to be made if a school is over subscribed and when an Own Admissions School raises or lowers its admission numbers
- New schools in the North Horsham development will be free schools which are deemed academies
- The Council tried to take account of inward migration – if places were available and met the admissions code, these applications could not be refused – the 5% margin helped accommodate this
- The Council exchanged information with neighbouring authorities about place demand – schools wouldn't be expanded based purely on out of county needs
- Even without new housing developments, demand for places could increase if families moved into an area or into accommodation that was traditionally not thought of as inhabited by families – something that could not be predicted
- Planning places had been reactive in the past, but was more difficult now that the Council had to plan 15 years ahead using predictive trends as there was no way of knowing how many children would be born in the years ahead
- Trends were going up and might level off for a while before potentially increasing again
- Head teachers were regularly updated on trends in pupil numbers and reported what was actually happening
- The Council looked at projected housing need and the rate of build – this was reviewed twice a year with need based on completed homes so it was possible to react quickly to changes in pupil numbers
- Average figures for the previous three years were also used to help inform future trends

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- Collecting raw data presented an issue - The new software worked on Office of National Statistics data, but other factors such as parental preference, popular schools and OFSTED ratings have to be taken into account.
- Some schools might not wish to, or be able to expand as this might compromise good education
- Long lasting modular buildings could be used in school expansions
- As admissions authority, the Council could direct schools to take more pupils but rarely needed to do so
- The DfE had reviewed the Council's projections and was happy with them
- Six form entries i.e. 180 pupils was the minimum viable for a new secondary school according to the DfE
- Infant class sizes were limited to thirty by law
- The Committee welcomed the news that very high percentages of children had got their first choice school in the county

12. Resolved that the Committee: -

- i. Supports the approach undertaken in West Sussex to plan school places and and the opportunities taken to secure external financing of new school places
- ii. Asks the Cabinet Member for Education and Skills to: -
 - a) Continue working with the district and borough councils and neighbouring authorities to identify local need and preferences as well as suitable locations for new provision
 - b) Continue working with head teachers and schools to ensure the best possible local provision of education for West Sussex children
 - c) To strongly request closer liaison between the County Council and the Regional Schools' Commissioner on a non-voting basis with joint working so the Council's advice can be taken on board
 - d) Continue working with relevant members to utilise local intelligence in the planning of school places in West Sussex

Appointment of Business Planning Group Members

13. Resolved - the Committee agrees to appoint the following members to its Business Planning Group – Mr Cloake (Chairman), Mr High, Ms Lord, Mrs Mullins and Mrs Sparkes.

Business Planning Group Report

14. Resolved - the Committee endorses the contents of the Business Planning Group report.

Appointment of a Lead Member for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

15. Resolved – the Committee agrees to appoint Mr High as its Lead Member for Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Outturn Total Performance Monitor 2016/17

16. The Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance, Performance and Procurement (copy appended to the signed minutes). The social care side of the report was introduced by Chris Salt, Strategic Finance Business Partner, and the education side of the report was introduced by Andy Thorne, Strategic Finance Business Partner.

17. Chris Salt told the Committee that: -

- The Children – Start of Life (now Children and Young People) budget was overspent by £3.9m due to growth in the numbers of Children Looked After, the increase in complexity of need of these children, the need for more permanent social workers and agency staff and loss of income due to the closure of the Beechfield Secure Unit
- The overspend was less than previously forecast as numbers of Children Looked After did not increase as much as expected after Christmas
- The 2017/18 budget process added £6.7m for children's social care and a number of initiatives were introduced to help future sustainability
- Looking forward, the position was still challenging, but the service was expected to be on budget

18. Andy Thorne told the Committee that: -

- The Education and Skills portfolio was underspent by £89k
- The main underspend was £1.8 from the Dedicated Schools Grant – the school redundancy allocation also spent less than anticipated
- The main overspend was £800k for transport to school, mainly for children with special educational needs, although this was down from £1.2m the previous year

19. Summary of responses to Members' questions and comments: -

- Residential care beds for children could cost between £4k and £6k a week
- In some cases, instead of making staff redundant, schools had not filled vacancies

14. Resolved – that the Committee notes the data and supporting commentary for the period to the end of the financial year 2016/17 and does not identify any issues for further scrutiny by this Committee or for referral to the Performance and Finance Select Committee.

Work Programme Planning

15. Resolved – the Committee approves the draft interim work programme.

Possible Items for Future Scrutiny (Members' Items)

16. The following suggestions were made for future scrutiny: -

- Nursery Provision
- The Adoption Process
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities placements

- Therapeutic Services
- School to School Support - Use of School Improvement Grant
- Small Schools Organisation
- Kinship Care
- Pupil Referral Units
- Pupils missing from School Rolls
- Recruitment and Retention of Foster Carers

17. Resolved – the Committee agrees that these suggestions be considered by the Business Planning Group

Date of next meeting

The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting will be held on 5 October 2017 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 13.51pm.

Chairman