

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

12 January 2017 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mrs Evans (Chairman)

Mr Blunden	Mrs Jones	Mr Smith
Mr High	Mr R Oakley	Mr Wickremaratchi
Dr Holt	Mr Oppler	
Mrs Jupp	Mr Parsons	

In attendance by invitation: Mrs Field (Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing) and Mr Hillier (Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life).

Apologies for absence were received from: - Mrs Bennett, Mr Cloake, Mrs Le Rossignol, Mrs Mullins and Mrs Ryan.

Declaration of Interests

103. No interests were declared at this point, see minute 115.

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

104. Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2016 be approved as a correct record and that they be signed by the Chairman.

West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2015/16

105. The Committee considered a report from the Independent Chair of the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report was introduced by Elaine Coleridge-Smith, the Independent Chair, who highlighted that due to their knowledge of the community within their division, Members could play an important role in safeguarding. This was because if they became aware of any safeguarding concerns locally these could be highlighted to the appropriate service promptly.

106. The Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life acknowledged that it was important to provide new Members with guidance to help them understand their safeguarding role within their division and ensuring they knew who they could talk to if they had concerns. In this respect it was important that this aspect was covered as part of the induction programme for Members following the elections.

107. The following points were raised in discussion; Members:-

- Raised concern that the District and Borough Councils had not been sufficiently involved in developing the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). *Helen Donelan, West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board Business Manager, explained that it was considered important to ensure the District and Borough Councils (D&BCs) were more involved in providing their input to the MASH. The Independent Chair would therefore shortly be reviewing membership of the*

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MASH Board and at this point could seek representation from the D&BCs for the Board.

- Welcomed the indication that a further awareness campaign would be run to assist new staff in understanding the Threshold document.
- Were disappointed to hear that, since publication of the report the capacity had not increased within the Independent Reviewing Officer service.
- Queried whether the issues with the 'Request for Support form' had been resolved. *Helen Donelan advised that a paper version of the form had now been produced to ensure all agencies could make use of the form.*
- Received clarification that, of the six cases brought to the attention of the Case Review sub-group, only 1 met the criteria to warrant a Serious Case Review being undertaken.
- Were advised that the knowledge gained by the Child Death Overview Panel in assessing the factors leading to a child's death was used to inform the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board's (WSSCB) approach to focussing campaign work. This assisted in targeting issues such as the promotion of safer sleeping practices for babies to help prevent infant deaths.
- The Cabinet Member for Community Wellbeing reminded the Committee of the local authority role with regard to the Coroner's service and the potential for the Coroner to highlight learning and make recommendations in appropriate circumstances
- Requested clarification regarding the work being done by the WSSCB to tackle Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). *Helen Donelan explained that the Board had commissioned a piece of work to try to ascertain the prevalence of FGM in the West Sussex area. The outcome of this work would be presented to the next meeting of the WSSCB and the Board could then develop an approach to dealing with this issue.*
- Highlighted their concern in relation to children who were home educated and the risk that these children were vulnerable to radicalisation. Members acknowledged that, due to the lack of robust legislation in relation to elective home education, the service had limited powers to act, as they had no legal right to insist on seeing or visiting children who were home educated. Although previous letters had been sent to the government on this matter the Committee suggested that the Cabinet Member should again write to the Secretary of State for Education to highlight continued concerns about this issue.
- Requested clarification regarding whether all children who went missing received a return home interview. *Elaine Coleridge-Smith explained that not every child was currently seen on their return, however all children who were categorised as high risk would receive an interview.*
- Welcomed the indication that the WSSCB were developing links with the West Sussex Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure that continuity of service provision was occurring as young people transitioned between Children's and Adults' Services.
- Acknowledged that the WSSCB would continue their focus on developing an understanding of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) within West Sussex. The Board had developed strong links with community partnership teams within the County Council and D&BCs and this would assist in obtaining any pertinent intelligence about CSE from these communities
- Were advised that 4 definitions of child neglect had been created by the WSSCB to enable more accurate recording of the type of neglect a child was experiencing.

108. Resolved that the Committee:-

- (1) Notes the successes and areas for improvement for the West Sussex Safeguarding Children Board in 2015/16
- (2) Notes the WSSCB priorities for 2016-19 and requests that the Committee are kept updated on progress at a frequency to be decided by the Business Planning Group. Evidence to include feedback from children.
- (3) Asks the Cabinet Member to write to the Secretary of State for Education to highlight concerns about the potential vulnerability of children who are home educated, given limited powers available to the local authority.

Update on child sexual exploitation & missing and children subject to child protection plans

109. The Committee considered a report from the Executive Director Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education (copy appended to the signed minutes). The report was introduced by Kevin Ball, Interim Head of Safeguarding Children, who highlighted the following points:-

- Good progress had been made with initiatives to raise awareness of and tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE); however more work was needed to improve data sharing between the different agencies to ensure the prompt dissemination of pertinent information between partners.
- There was concern that data analysis indicated the numbers of West Sussex children subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) for over 18 months and also the number of Children who have been the subject of more than one CPP were higher than the national average. This seemed to indicate that step up and step down arrangements may not be effective enough, so the service would be focussing on this issue in the coming months.

110. The following points were raised in discussion; Members:-

- Queried what support was available in schools for children that may be at risk of CSE. *Deborah Myers, Director of Education and Skills, explained that school staff had received training and were more aware of the signals to look for, such as changes in behaviour, that may indicate concerns about a particular child being vulnerable to CSE. If this was the case these concerns would be reported to the safeguarding lead within the school who could then escalate this as appropriate to Children's Services.*
- Suggested that consideration should be given to encouraging schools to include information about CSE on their website and links to where young people could access advice and support regarding CSE.
- Highlighted that anecdotal evidence indicated some members of ethnic communities may face barriers to accessing information about and reporting potential incidents of CSE and that the service should consider engaging with representatives of ethnic groups to explore this issue.
- Acknowledged the benefits of the theatre production 'Chelsea's Choice' in raising awareness of the issues surrounding CSE and suggested that it would be beneficial to include a performance of the production as part of the induction programme for new members following the election.

- Queried whether there were any programmes set up for young parents to educate them about safeguarding. *Avril Wilson, Executive Director Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education, explained that programmes for teenage parents were provided by the Family Nurse Partnership to assist them in becoming competent parents. In addition GPs and health visitors would be alert to highlighting safeguarding issues when they interacted with young parents.*
111. Resolved that the Committee :-
- (1) Asks the Member Development Group to consider the proposal of including a performance of Chelsea's Choice as part of the Member Induction Programme
 - (2) Asks the Cabinet Member to consider the potential to require all new Members of the Children and Young People's Services Select Committee to complete safeguarding training before attending Select Committee meetings.

School Funding Review 2017-18

112. The Committee considered a report by the Executive Director Children, Adults, Families, Health and Education (copy appended to the signed minutes).

113. The report was introduced by Deborah Myers, Director of Education and Skills, who indicated that the service had carried out briefing sessions to assist schools in understanding the proposed changes to funding set out within the consultation document; these sessions had been attended by 200 schools.

114. The Chairman highlighted that Ken Lloyd, Chair of the Education and Skills Forum, and Chair of Governors at two schools within West Sussex, was in attendance to assist the Committee in understanding the views of the schools.

115. Mr Blunden declared a personal interest as a member of the Education and Skills Forum.

116. The following points were raised in discussion; Members:-

- Raised concern that only 32% of maintained schools and academies submitted a response to the consultation. *Jeanmarie Long, Principal Manager, Compliance, explained that there had been a higher response rate than previous years, when it had been about 10%. The service had done as much as possible to encourage schools to provide a response such as ensuring the briefing sessions were held in a number of different areas around the County to ensure as many schools as possible could attend. Ken Lloyd, Chair of the Education and Skills Forum, assured the Committee that the schools were fully aware that if they wanted their opinion to be known that they needed to provide a response to the consultation. In addition some schools may choose to make their views about the proposals known via their representative headteachers' executive.*
- Welcomed the proposal that any budgetary deficit carried by a school that was becoming a sponsored academy would be converted to a loan for repayment in full.

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- Were concerned that the proposed de-delegation of £45 per pupil for maintained schools, due to the cessation of the General Duties Education Support Grant, may create a perverse incentive for schools to convert to academies as the academies were receiving transitional funding protection for removal of this grant.
- Acknowledged that the County Council had, in recent times, developed a greater focus on school improvement and were concerned that this would suffer with the proposed changes to funding arrangements. *Deborah Myers confirmed that the intention was implement a more robust school improvement service and that this would be through a number of methods, to ensure efficient utilisation of the funds available, including encouraging school to school support.*
- Were assured that ethnic minority and Gypsy Roma Traveller pupils who attended an academy received a similar level of support to those who went to maintained schools.
- Queried whether there were concerns raised by schools in response to the consultation. *Jeanmarie Long indicated that there had been comments received that opposed the proposals, which was to be expected, as the nature of the changes meant that some individual schools would be more adversely affected than others. The role of the local authority is to make decisions in the best interests of all schools.*
- Welcomed the confirmation from Ken Lloyd that there had been a good discussion across the Education and Skills Forum about the proposals and that it was felt the decisions made by the Forum represented the best options for all schools.

117. Resolved that the Committee:-

Endorse the following proposals that will be the subject of a decision by the Cabinet Member for Finance

- (1) The primary free school meal unit value is reduced in 2017/18 and that savings are redistributed through per pupil funding (as set out in section 3.1).
- (2) Use the same unit value for Bands 4, 5 and 6 for the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI) (as set out in section 3.2).
- (3) Allocate a split site allowance for the Rock Road site of Steyning Grammar School from September 2017 (£125.8k plus mileage) (as set out in section 3.3).
- (4) Collaborative and preventative budgets are redirected as necessary to meet the High Needs cost pressures in 2017/18 (as set in section 5).
- (5) Section 4.11 of the West Sussex Scheme for Financing Schools be amended so that deficit budgets are converted to loans for repayment and that any outstanding loan, when a school converts to an academy, be repaid in full or be transferred to sponsored academies (as set out in section 6).

Notes the decisions of the Education and Skills (Schools) Forum made at its meeting on the 1st December 2016 that:-

- (6) No changes are made to the Growth Fund allocation policy for 2017/18. (as detailed in section 3.4).

- (7) Maintained schools representatives in primary and secondary phases agreed the de-delegation of specified funding for 2017/18 (as detailed in section 3.5):
 - a) Ethnic Minority Traveller Achievement Team
 - b) Free School Meal eligibility checking
 - c) Schools in financial difficulty
 - d) Supply cover costs for County Secretaries for teaching professional associations.
- (8) Notes that the Education and Skills (Schools) Forum will make a decision on the 24th January regarding de-delegation of the General Duties Educational Services Grant (ESG)(as detailed in section 4).

Request for Call-in

118. The Chairman advised that, since publication of the agenda papers, the Business Planning Group had decided to refuse a call-in request relating to a non-key decision by the Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life regarding renewal of a contract for a service to support Children and Young People at high risk of or experience of Child Sexual Exploitation. Further details of this call-in would be reported at the March meeting of the Committee.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

119. The Committee considered a tabled paper which was a new version of the Forward Plan, February – May 2017 (copy appended to the signed minutes). This version of the Forward Plan was not included in the Committee papers as it had been published following the statutory despatch of the agenda.

120. Members queried whether the decision in relation to future arrangements for Children and Family Centre services in the Findon Valley would be taken soon as the Committee had first been alerted to this proposal a number of months ago. *Mrs Wilson indicated that the report had been drafted for the Cabinet Member and there were still a few queries to address, but it was anticipated the decision would be taken soon.*

121. Mandy Shipley, Senior Advisor, highlighted the decision due to be taken in January in relation to the approval to in-source or procure a service for provision of the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service for children with harmful sexualised behaviour (the Assessment Treatment Service). The Committee did not indicate a desire to scrutinise this decision.

122. The Chairman highlighted a new decision within the Forward Plan regarding early Years Free Entitlement Funding with effect from April 2017. *Avril Wilson explained that this related to implementing a new formula for the funding given to early years providers across the County. It was explained that, on the whole, this would mean an increase in funds for the providers and it was important that details about these changes were communicated in the near future to assist the providers in their budget setting process. The Committee did not indicate a wish to scrutinise this decision.*

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

Possible Items for Future Scrutiny

124. Members were advised that the intention was to provide a session before the March meeting where the Committee would have the opportunity to suggest their priorities for scrutiny after the elections.

Date of next meeting

125. The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting will be held on 9 March 2017 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 1.38pm.

Chairman