

Children and Young People's Services Select Committee

8 December 2016 – At a meeting of the Committee held at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

Present: Mr Cloake (Chairman)

Mr Blunden	Mrs Jupp	Mr Parsons
Mrs Evans	Mrs Le Rossignol	Mr Smith
Mr High	Mr R Oakley	Mr Wickremaratchi
Dr Holt	Mr Oppler	

In attendance by invitation: Mr Hillier (Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life).

Apologies for absence were received from:- Mrs Bennett, Mrs Jones, Mrs Mullins and Mrs Ryan.

Declaration of Interests

81. In accordance with the Code of Conduct the following personal interests were declared:-

- Mr Cloake – Item 5 (Future arrangements for Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help Service) as a West Sussex Foster Carer and the spouse of someone who is a Social Worker for the County Council
- Mr Oppler – Item5 – as a West Sussex Foster Carer

Minutes of the last meeting of the Committee

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

Cabinet Member Response

83. The Committee considered a response from the Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life in relation to the Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help Service (copy appended to the signed minutes).

84. Resolved that:-The Committee notes the response from the Cabinet Member.

Future Arrangements for Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help Service

85. Avril Wilson, Executive Director of Childrens', Adults', Health & Education, introduced the report (copy appended to the signed minutes) explaining that the intention was to deliver a joined up, holistic offer that provided appropriate intervention for children and families in need at the earliest opportunity. This proposal mirrored the intentions at a national level that health services should be provided via a more joined up, integrated system including preventative services, Children's and Adult's Social Care.

86. Annie MacIver, Director of Family Operations, highlighted that much effort had been put into ensuring that staff had been kept fully informed about

Agenda Item No.2

development of the proposal and were able to contribute their thoughts on shaping the new service.

87. Hayley Connor, Strategic Commissioning Manager, Jackie Lincoln, Interim Principal Manager and Charlene Hornsey, Keyworker Lead (Adur and Worthing), provided a Powerpoint presentation (copy appended to the signed minutes). The following points were highlighted:-

- There was a need to ensure that intervention was focussed more holistically on supporting the whole family
- By using a model focussed on Hubs this would provide a central point within the community where families could access a wide range of expertise.
- The proposal would bring the workforce together encouraging closer links and avoiding the need for families to be signposted to various different services.
- A team were already trialling the integrated service model to identify any issues that needed resolving before it was rolled out more widely. The staff in this team had already commented on the benefits of this closer working such as the ability to make best use of the different skill sets of colleagues from the different service areas.

88. Dan Sartin, Branch Secretary of Unison, addressed the Committee to represent the views of the staff and highlighted the following points:-

- There had been a good programme of staff engagement and the opportunity for staff to contribute to shaping the proposal through the co-design process was welcomed.
- Staff were positive about the principle of an integrated service but wanted reassurance that they would still be supported by suitably skilled and knowledgeable managers.
- Staff were keen to continue utilising their skills and specialisms rather than carrying out a generic role. They welcomed the training and development that would be offered to equip them with the skills needed for their new roles but felt it was important that a range of training options were provided, rather than just an on-line offer.
- Due to the vacancy management policy that already existed, Unison welcomed the suggestion that it was unlikely that redundancies would be necessary, though it was stressed that this should not mean staff being allocated to unsuitable roles. However there was concern that, since the vacancy management had been in place, staff had been expected to take on a greater workload. As it was expected these higher work volumes would continue with the new model there was concern that this would adversely impact on staff morale as they struggled to cope. Unison welcomed a commitment from the lead officers that, following implementation of the new model, they would monitor the adequacy of staff resources in relation to the volume of work, with a baseline survey to be conducted before launch to establish existing volumes.
- There was concern that staff would be carrying out new roles and there may be an accompanying re-grading process leading to 'grade slippage', but without a full job re-evaluation, meaning staff undertaking more complex and demanding work without any additional remuneration or even on lower grades. Unison felt this was inappropriate and would be monitoring this issue after implementation.
- Staff have built strong relationships within the communities in the geographical area where they currently work and were concerned that they may be asked to cover a different part of the County where they did not have these links.

Agenda Item No.2

- There was currently a lack of clarity about the progress of the procurement in relation to the Healthy Child Programme.
- There was concern about the impact of the budget reduction to the service of £3million over the next three years.

89. Stephen Hillier, Cabinet Member for Children - Start of Life, welcomed the comments made by Unison and explained that it was hoped the new model would assist the service in interacting with families that were hard to reach and who didn't currently actively engage with Children's Social Care.

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

- Raised concern about the target for obtaining an assessment within 4 weeks for a mental health referral as it was felt this timeframe was too long and that children referred should be seen more quickly. The Committee asked that this target be reviewed.
- Highlighted the issue of the lack of availability of affordable rental properties that were fit for purpose for those families either reliant on benefits or existing on low income and the negative impacts this had on these families. *Avril Wilson explained that as social housing provision came under the remit of District and Borough Councils the County Council was working closely with these organisations, as part of the work to develop the local growth plan, to explore opportunities for increasing the availability of affordable accommodation. To try and ease pressures in the short term, the service were working with families who were hard to place, due to previous incidents of falling into rent arrears, to try and secure tenancies for them. The Cabinet Member highlighted that the Start of Life Partnership Board, which included representatives from District and Borough Councils, were due to consider the issues surrounding availability of housing at their next meeting*
- Requested clarity regarding the proposal to implement the new model from April 2017 as it was felt this was a very tight timescale. *Hayley Connor advised that there was further work to be done to finalise the staff structure and the transition plan but that the service were well-prepared for the go live in April. The tender process for engaging a partner to deliver the Healthy Child Programme was also nearing completion; once finalised work could start to integrate the services. Dan Sartin welcomed the fact that a transition plan was being developed and asked for this to be shared with Unison. He highlighted that staff were anxious to know what the proposed structure would be and hoped this would be shared with them at the earliest possible opportunity.* The Committee stressed that as they had not had the opportunity to see a detailed operating model, transition plan or staffing structure that they wanted the Business Planning Group to monitor progress following implementation of the new model and the Committee to receive a report to review progress within a year.
- Were concerned that following the elections, new Members should be made fully aware of the Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help Service so that any who became Committee Members were suitably informed and able to contribute to future scrutiny.

Agenda Item No.2

- Queried whether the re-structuring of the service would have been developed if there wasn't a need to make savings. *Avril Wilson stressed that a proposal would have been brought forward to revise the service model anyway as it had already been recognised that the County Council needed to alter the delivery model to create a more joined up service that reflected national best practice. As a consequence of these revisions though savings could be achieved, as it was expected that fewer children would need to receive costly tier 4 level services and management efficiencies could be made.*
- Requested clarification as to whether there would be an impact on those in rural areas who would be used to accessing services locally, but may have to travel further to get to a hub location, and whether this may be a deterrent to engaging with the service. *Jackie Lincoln advised that there would still be area teams and outreach workers that operated in rural areas, services could also be accessed through Children and Family Centres which were located within communities.*
- Queried how the change management process was being managed. *Avril Wilson advised that senior service staff were steering the change management process and were drawing on support from colleagues in finance, legal services and Human Resources to assist with providing expertise in these areas.*

91. The Cabinet Member thanked the leadership team for their work and the staff for their involvement in the co-design process.

92. Resolved that the Committee:-

- (1) Endorses the proposals for the future arrangements for the Integrated Prevention and Earliest Help Service.
- (2) Will review the implementation of the new service model, with a report to the Business Planning Group in six months and to full Committee in 12 months

The Committee also asks the Cabinet Member to:-

- (3) Review the target for the wait time for a mental health assessment with a view to reducing it to less than 4 weeks to ensure a swifter response to children in need of these services
- (4) Investigate the negative impact of poor housing provision on demand for the IPEH service
- (5) Explore the potential for 'double hatted' members of the County Council to share with their District and Borough Council colleagues the strategic objectives of the service with reference to cross cutting issues such as unmet housing need
- (6) Ensure that he is fully informed about the details of the proposed operating model, the staff response through the formal consultation process to that model and any revisions made as a consequence
- (7) Ensure that the induction for new elected members following the election in May 2017,

includes information about the essential nature of the IPEH and wider Children's Services

Report from the Business Planning Group

93. The Committee considered a report by the Chairman of the Business Planning Group (copy appended to the signed minutes).

94. The Chairman highlighted that volunteers were still sought for membership of the Education and Skills Annual Report Task and Finish Group; Mrs Jupp, Mr Oakley and Mr Parsons indicated that they would be happy to join the Task and Finish Group.

95. Resolved that the Committee:-

- (1) Supports the proposed approach to the agenda items for forthcoming meetings and updates to the work programme.
- (2) Notes that Mrs Jupp, Mrs Le Rossignol, Mr Oakley and Mr Parsons will form the membership of the Education and Skills Annual Report Task and Finish Group

Request for Call-in

96. The Chairman advised that the Business Planning Group had decided to refuse a call-in request relating to a decision by the Cabinet Member for Children – Start of Life (copy of call-in request and reasons for rejection appended to the signed minutes) due to the fact that pre-decision scrutiny had taken place and there was insufficient new information available to warrant additional scrutiny.

97. Resolved – That the reasons for rejection of the call-in request be noted.

Forward Plan of Key Decisions

98. The Committee considered a tabled paper which was a new version of the Forward Plan, January – April 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.

99. Members sought clarity about the decision in relation to future arrangements for Children and Family Centre services in the Findon Valley. *Mrs Wilson indicated that this involved relocating some of the existing Children and Family Centre services to the library building in Findon, thereby making more effective use of the building during hours when the library was not operating.*

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

Possible Items for Future Scrutiny

101. Mr Parsons requested further information about the position regarding the completion of Woodlands Mead Special School following concerns raised by parents of pupils at the school. *Mandy Shipley, Senior Advisor, advised that a briefing note providing further information on this issue had been requested from officers and this would be circulated to all Members.*

Date of next meeting

102. The Committee noted that the next scheduled meeting will be held on 12 January 2017 at 10.30am at County Hall, Chichester.

The meeting ended at 12.46pm.

Chairman